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Committed Kerry Voters More Active Than Bush Backers; Bush Backers More Religious, Annenberg Data Show

Committed Kerry voters are more active than solid Bush backers in campaign activities from posting signs or bumper stickers to giving money to candidates to just talking about the campaign, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

Committed Bush supporters attend more religious services than firm Kerry supporters, are more likely to be white and male, more likely to be married and less likely to be naturalized citizens.

Adam Clymer, political director of the survey, said "But these clear distinctions pale in comparison to their differences on political issues and perceptions of candidates, gaps so vast that they could be coming from different planets." For example, 52 percent of solid Bush backers call the economy good or excellent, compared to 4 percent of firm Kerry supporters. And 88 percent of the Bush backers said the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, while only 8 percent of the Kerry supporters.

Between the two camps on issues and demographics but far below them on interest and participation were the dwindling ranks of persuadable voters, who made up only 12 percent of the 1,998 registered voters interviewed from October 18 through 24. While 48 percent of the firm Bush backers and 52 percent of the Kerry adherents said they had discussed politics with family or friends at least four times in the last week, just 31 percent of persuadable voters had.

Persadable voters are those who said they are undecided or said they have a preference between George W. Bush, John Kerry or Ralph Nader but there was a "good chance" they could change their minds. Committed voters were those who said there was either "no chance" they would change their minds or that it was "pretty unlikely."

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Political interest is up substantially from 2000, comparisons with the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey showed. For example, at this point in the 2000 campaign, 38 percent of registered voters said they had discussed the campaign with family or friends at least four times in the previous week. This year it is 48 percent. Some of the biggest increases were recorded by blacks, going from 27 percent in 2000 to 45 percent this year, Hispanics, going from 23 to 47 percent, and people with a high school education or less, going from 24 to 40 percent.

Not only did the Kerry backers talk about the campaign more in person, they were more likely to chat about it on the Internet, with 14 percent of them, compared to 10 percent of the Bush backers, talking politics on-line at least once a week. And despite marginally lower household incomes, 21 percent of them said they had given money to a presidential candidate, compared to 15 percent of the Bush adherents.

Their differences on issues were paralleled by equally gaping gaps on perceptions of candidates. Among Bush backers, 95 percent called Bush a stronger leader than Kerry. Among Kerry supporters, 82 percent picked Kerry. The persuadables preferred Bush, by 50 percent to 32 percent.

And while 73 percent of the Bush supporters said Bush was more knowledgeable than Kerry, 87 percent of the Kerry backers chose Kerry. The persuadables preferred Kerry, 48 to 25 percent.

The two camps got their news from very different sources. Forty-two percent of Kerry backers, and 27 percent of Bush supporters, watched network news at least four times a week. Twenty-six percent of Bush supporters listened to talk radio four times a week, compared to just 13 percent of Kerry's supporters.

The favorite cable news channel of the Bush camp was Fox, preferred by 40 percent, while only 17 percent of them liked CNN best. Among Kerry's supporters, the choice was CNN, at 40 percent; just 13 percent liked Fox best.

The survey also asked seven questions about positions on domestic issues from tax cuts to health care, to Medicare to Social Security. Twenty-two percent of the committed Kerry backers got all seven correct, compared to 11 percent of the Bush backers and 9 percent of the persuadables.

Demographically, Kerry got 20 percent of his support from blacks and 12 percent from Hispanics. Bush got 2 percent from blacks and 5 percent from Hispanics. Seventy-four percent of Bush supporters were married, compared to 62 percent of Kerry's. Fifty-one percent of Bush's backers attended religious services at least once a week, compared to 34 percent of Kerry's. Forty-one percent of Bush supporters were white born-again Christians, compared to just 11 percent of Kerry's. Sixty percent of Bush's supporters had a gun in their household, while 30 percent of Kerry's did.

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Nine percent of Kerry’s backers were naturalized citizens, compared to five percent of Bush’s. Twenty percent of the Kerry contingent were from union households, while 10 percent of Bush’s were.

Fifty-four percent of the persuadables were men and 46 percent were women. In the Bush camp, 49 percent were men and 51 percent were women. Among Kerry supporters, 57 percent were women and 43 percent were men.

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.

Table A. Campaign participation among Bush, Kerry and persuadable voters

	Committed to Bush	Committed to Kerry	Persadable
Wore a campaign button or displayed yard sign or bumper sticker	21%	31%	4%
Gave money to a presidential candidate	15%	21%	4%
Discussed politics with friends or family 4 times or more in last week	48%	52%	31%
Discussed politics at work 4 times or more in last week	24%	26%	21%
Watched: National network news 4 times of more in past week	27%	42%	31%
Cable TV news 4 times or more in past week	46%	39%	33%
Local news 4 times or more in past week	57%	63%	53%
Read newspaper 4 times or more in past week	48%	53%	47%
Listened to talk radio at least 4 times in past week	26%	13%	16%
Listened to National Public Radio at least 4 times in past week	9%	17%	10%
Considered: Fox News favorite cable channel	40%	13%	19%
CNN favorite news channel	17%	40%	33%
Talked about politics on Internet at least <i>once</i> in past week	10%	14%	8%
Said they are following presidential campaign very closely	51%	54%	33%
Answered seven questions about domestic issues correctly	11%	22%	9%
Said they are certain to vote in presidential election	93%	92%	76%

Table B. Political views among Bush, Kerry and persuadable voters

	Committed to Bush	Committed to Kerry	Persuadable
Supporting own candidate more than opposing the other	70%	44%	*
Opposing other more than supporting own candidate	28%	52%	*
Said: country is generally going in right direction	75%	7%	25%
Things are seriously off on wrong track	17%	88%	57%
Iraq situation was worth going to war over	88%	8%	34%
Was <i>not</i> worth going to war over	9%	89%	53%
U.S. should keep troops in Iraq until government is stable	85%	38%	60%
U.S. should bring troops home as soon as possible	11%	57%	36%
Consider national economy: Excellent	2%	0%	1%
Good	50%	4%	17%
Fair	40%	45%	45%
Poor	7%	51%	37%
Consider personal economic situation: Excellent	13%	6%	4%
Good	60%	33%	36%
Fair	23%	44%	46%
Poor	4%	17%	13%
Considered Bush a stronger leader than Kerry	95%	8%	50%
Considered Kerry a stronger leader than Bush	1%	82%	32%
Considered Bush more knowledgeable than Kerry	73%	3%	25%
Considered Kerry more knowledgeable than Bush	10%	87%	48%
Considered Bush more of a flip-flopper than Kerry	10%	52%	32%
Considered Kerry more of a flip-flopper than Bush	80%	29%	48%
Considered Bush more unwilling to admit mistakes than Kerry	26%	64%	39%
Considered Kerry more unwilling to admit mistakes than Bush	52%	21%	32%

*Question not asked

Table C. Demographics of Bush, Kerry and Persuadable Voters

	Committed to Bush	Committed to Kerry	Persuadable
Men	49%	43%	54%
Women	51%	57%	46%
White	94%	73%	76%
Black	2%	20%	13%
Latino	5%	12%	8%
Age: 18-29	14%	21%	20%
30-44	30%	28%	32%
45-64	37%	35%	25%
65 & older	18%	16%	22%
Education: High School or Less	42%	43%	41%
Some college	30%	27%	32%
College degree or more	28%	30%	27%
Household income: less than \$35,000	24%	34%	29%
\$35,000 to \$74,999	39%	33%	34%
\$75,000 or more	28%	26%	23%
Union household	10%	20%	21%
Someone in household unemployed	7%	12%	10%
Married or living as married	74%	62%	63%
Born in United States	95%	91%	95%
Naturalized citizen	5%	9%	5%
Gun in household	60%	30%	43%
Attend religious services: more than once a week	20%	10%	11%
Once a week	31%	24%	27%
Once or twice a month	14%	18%	16%
A few times a year	22%	27%	24%
Never	13%	21%	20%
White born-again Christians	41%	11%	24%
Other white Protestants	18%	18%	21%
White Catholics	23%	29%	19%
Political Conservatives	66%	18%	33%
Moderates	29%	40%	48%
Liberals	5%	39%	16%

	Committed to Bush	Committed to Kerry	Persuadable
Republicans	67%	3%	16%
Democrats	5%	68%	21%
Independents	22%	23%	41%
Northeast	18%	28%	25%
Midwest	23%	23%	23%
South	38%	30%	30%
West	20%	19%	22%
Urban	20%	31%	30%
Suburban	53%	50%	50%
Rural	27%	18%	20%

Table D.

	Registered Voters			
	October 2000		October 2004	
	Zero through Three Days Per Week	Four to Seven days per week	Zero through Three Days Per Week	Four to Seven days per week
Discussed politics with family or friends in past week				
Total	61%	38%	52%	48%
Male	61%	39%	52%	48%
Female	62%	38%	52%	48%
Black	73%	27%	55%	45%
White	59%	40%	51%	49%
Hispanic	77%	23%	53%	47%
18 to 29	60%	39%	54%	45%
30 to 44	65%	35%	55%	45%
45 to 64	56%	43%	47%	53%
65 and older	63%	36%	55%	44%
High School or less	76%	24%	60%	40%
Some college	57%	42%	48%	52%
College degree or higher	41%	58%	44%	55%

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 12 through 18, 2004, 1,998 registered voters were interviewed. From October 17 through 23, 2000, 1,752 registered voters were interviewed. 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. For smaller subgroups, such as committed Bush voters or committed Kerry voters, the margin of sampling error would be plus or minus three percentage points, and for persuadable voters it would be plus or minus six 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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