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### **Despite Limited Convention Television Coverage, Public Learned About Campaign from Democrats, Annenberg Data Show**

Despite minimal network television coverage, the Democratic National Convention increased the public's knowledge of the positions John Kerry and George W. Bush hold on a range of issues and left 69 percent of the public convinced they knew enough about Kerry to decide how to vote, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

A sample of 847 adults was interviewed before the convention and again after it, and their answers changed on many questions. Before the convention 33 percent of the panel correctly identified the income group (\$200,000 or more) whose taxes Kerry wanted to increase; afterwards 50 percent could. That was the biggest change on an issue, but another message Kerry was trying to get out – that he was a former prosecutor -- also showed a sharp increase, from 48 percent knowing before the convention to 63 percent after it was over.

The 63 percent who said they had watched at least a few minutes of Kerry's acceptance speech were especially satisfied with what they had learned about Kerry. Before the convention 64 percent of them said they knew enough about Kerry to know how to vote. That rose to 76 percent afterwards

These findings paralleled the conclusions of an Annenberg panel study in 2000. After the Republican convention, the first held in that year, knowledge of Bush's support for using a portion of Social Security taxes for stock market investment went from 63 to 69 percent, and awareness of his calls for restricting abortion rose from 51 to 55 percent. Knowledge that he had once owned a baseball team increased from 43 to 56 percent.

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Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the survey and of its parent Annenberg Public Policy Center, said “Despite signals from pundits that conventions are staged substanceless, media events and the broadcast networks’ assumption that they are worthy of minimal prime time, party conventions remain an important source of issue information for those who watch as well as those whose interest in them is expressed in a heightened attention to news. If media coverage would focus less on the candidates’ presumed political intent and more on the candidates’ positions on issues and the impact those policies would have on our lives, conventions would produce even greater gains in public knowledge.”

There were only slight changes in views of Bush on specific issues, most of them statistically insignificant, like a change in the percentage who viewed him favorably. Before the convention, 45 percent had a favorable view of Bush. Afterwards 47 percent did. But with the survey’s margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points, that change could easily have been attributed to random variation

For Kerry, the change was greater. Before the convention 49 percent of the panel had a favorable opinion of him; afterwards it rose to 55 percent, a change that just exceeded the margin of sampling error.

But other measures clearly helped Kerry. Before the convention 42 percent of respondents said he spent a “great deal of time” criticizing Bush. Afterwards, it dropped to 28 percent. And the percentage believing he had a “clear plan” for bringing matters in Iraq to a successful conclusion went from 26 to 40 percent. Among those who listened to his speech – a group that was more supportive of him to begin with than those who did not listen -- belief in his having such a plan for Iraq rose from 32 to 47 percent.

Some other issues Kerry stressed also showed increases in knowledge. The percentage knowing of his opposition to tax breaks for U.S. corporations operating overseas rose from 33 to 46 percent. Knowledge of his support for making it easier for unions to organize grew just from 63 to 72 percent. But knowledge of his support for health insurance for all children grew only from 67 to 70 percent, perhaps because knowledge of that position was already very widely known.

That National Annenberg Election Survey, the largest academic election poll, is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania ([www.AnnenbergPublicPolicyCenter.org](http://www.AnnenbergPublicPolicyCenter.org)). It has been tracking the presidential campaign since October 7, and interviewing will continue until after Election Day. 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](http://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](http://www.FactCheck.Org).

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## Tables

### A. Knowledge of Kerry's Issue Stances

	Respondents who knew the convention had occurred		Saw at least a few minutes of Kerry's speech		Did not see any of Kerry's Speech	
	Pre-Convention	Post-Convention	Pre-Convention	Post-Convention	Pre-Convention	Post-Convention
John Kerry says that he would eliminate the Bush tax cuts on those making how much money: Over 50 thousand a year, Over 100 thousand a year, <b>Over 200 thousand a year</b> , or Over 500,000 a year?						
<b>% Correctly Answering</b>	33%	50%	34%	58%	32%	35%
Who is a former prosecutor? George W. Bush, <b>John Kerry</b> , Both or Neither?						
<b>% Correctly Answering</b>	48%	63%	49%	67%	47%	57%
Who favors eliminating tax breaks for overseas profits of American corporations and using the money to cut corporate income taxes? George W. Bush, <b>John Kerry</b> , Both or Neither?						
<b>% Correctly Answering</b>	33%	46%	34%	50%	29%	38%
Who favors the federal government helping to pay for health insurance for all children and helping employers pay the cost of the workers' health insurance? George W. Bush, <b>John Kerry</b> , Both or Neither?						
<b>% Correctly Answering</b>	67%	70%	71%	74%	60%	62%
Who wants to make it easier for unions to organize? George W. Bush, <b>John Kerry</b> , Both or Neither?						
<b>% Correctly Answering</b>	63%	72%	66%	75%	56%	68%

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## B. Attitudes toward Bush and Kerry

	Respondents who knew the convention had occurred		Saw at least a few minutes of Kerry's speech		Did not see any of Kerry's Speech	
	Pre-Convention	Post-Convention	Pre-Convention	Post-Convention	Pre-Convention	Post-Convention
For each of the following people in politics, please tell me if your opinion is favorable or unfavorable: <b>George W. Bush</b>						
<b>Favorable</b>	45%	47%	37%	40%	58%	60%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	47%	45%	57%	54%	29%	29%
For each of the following people in politics, please tell me if your opinion is favorable or unfavorable: <b>John Kerry</b>						
<b>Favorable</b>	49%	55%	60%	64%	31%	38%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	34%	33%	27%	26%	47%	43%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?						
<b>Approve</b>	46%	46%	37%	38%	62%	60%
<b>Disapprove</b>	52%	53%	61%	62%	36%	38%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the nation's economy?						
<b>Approve</b>	43%	40%	37%	35%	53%	51%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55%	59%	62%	65%	43%	48%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is currently handling the situation in Iraq?						
<b>Approve</b>	39%	41%	33%	35%	50%	51%
<b>Disapprove</b>	58%	58%	66%	64%	44%	48%
Do you think John Kerry has a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion, or don't you think so?						
<b>Has a clear plan</b>	26%	40%	32%	47%	13%	27%
<b>Doesn't have a clear plan</b>	61%	55%	55%	47%	74%	69%
So far have you learned enough about John Kerry to have a good idea of what kind of a president he would be if he was elected to serve the next four years?						
<b>Learned enough</b>	59%	69%	64%	76%	49%	56%

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## 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 July 16 through July 25, the night before the Democratic National Convention began, and from July 30, the day after it concluded through August 8. A total of 847 adults were interviewed before the convention and then reinterviewed afterwards. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, results for all registered voters will differ by no more than three 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 example, for people who watched at least some of John Kerry's speech accepting the presidential nomination, it would be plus or minus four percentage points. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents which would lead to higher potential sampling error on those questions.

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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