



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 19, 2004

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

VISIT: www.naes04.org

Large Majority of Democrats Still Bitter Over 2000, National Annenberg Election Survey Shows

Far from putting the disputed 2000 election behind them, 69 percent of Democrats say Al Gore really won it but was “somehow cheated” out of the White House, and that group provides a core of intense support for Senator John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, the University of Pennsylvania’s National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

That sense of injustice to Gore was shared by 9 percent of Republicans and 37 percent of independents. Overall 38 percent of the public said they thought Gore had been cheated, while 54 percent said he had not.

Adam Clymer, political director of the survey, said “While many on the side that loses an election typically think there was something unfair about the result, those attitudes usually fade as time passes. But this time, after the prolonged uncertainty followed by a hotly debated Supreme Court decision that favored George Bush, the bitterness remains.”

“After the Supreme Court decision,” he said, “the 2000 National Annenberg Election survey asked people if they thought the Supreme Court had acted fairly or unfairly. Forty-one percent of the public and 67 percent of Democrats said ‘unfairly’ – percentages which are very close to today’s answers on an even more bluntly worded question.”

Between March 1 and 15 of this year, a total of 1,326 adults were asked whether “you agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘Al Gore really won the 2000 presidential election but was somehow cheated out of the presidency?’” The margin of sampling error for all respondents was plus or minus three percentage points. For Democrats, Republicans or independents, it was plus or minus five points.

-More-

Republicans did disagree with the statement even more strongly than Democrats agreed with it. Eighty-eight percent of Republicans said they disagreed, 79 percent of them “strongly,” while of the 69 percent of Democrats who agreed, only 54 percent said “strongly.” But Clymer said that unless the Democrats made an issue of their view of 2000 and stirred Republicans up over that controversy, it was unlikely that the strength of Republican disagreement would matter as much at the ballot box as the Democratic disagreement.

Another indication of how the Democratic bitterness lingered has been demonstrated by CBS News/New York Times polling. On nine occasions between December 2000 and last week, they have asked if respondents think “George W. Bush legitimately won the 2000 election, or not.” The answers have been very consistent, starting at 40 percent saying he had not, and never varying outside of sampling error from that level. In the most recent polling, 56 percent said he had been legitimately elected and 38 percent said he had not, and the party breakdowns were almost identical to the Annenberg findings.

In the 2004 Annenberg polling, the only demographic group with a higher percentage saying they “strongly agree” that Gore had been cheated than Democrats did was African-Americans, among whom 68 percent held that view. So did 42 percent of liberals. “Strong” disagreement was cited by 58 percent of conservatives.

In the 2000 Annenberg polling, the first year of this continuing project, a wide battery of questions were asked in the period between the December 12, 2000, Supreme Court decision and Inauguration Day on January 2004. In that period 2,704 people were interviewed. Polling stopped the day before Bush was sworn in as President. The margin of sampling error for the entire group was plus or minus two percentage points, and for Democrats, Republicans or Independents, it was plus or minus three percentage points.

Another measure of the bitterness of the time was reflected by 51 percent of Republicans saying they thought “Gore campaign tried to steal the election,” and 54 percent of Democrats saying the same of the Bush campaign. Sixty-five percent of Democrats, and 30 percent of Republicans said they thought “the justices on the US Supreme Court were influenced by their personal political views in deciding this case.”

They were also asked; “Which comes closer to your views? Rather quickly, the American public will be able to put any bitterness from the election behind them, or it will take a long time for the American public to recover from the ill will surrounding this election?” Fifty-two percent thought it would come quickly, while 44 percent said it would take a long time.

Republicans were more optimistic. Sixty percent predicted quick recovery from bitterness, while 36 percent said it would take a long time. Among Democrats, 50 percent said it would take a long time, and 46 said it would be over quickly.

-More-

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). 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 a project that tries to hold politicians accountable by exposing false or misleading campaign statements. It is available online at www.FactCheck.Org.

-More-

2004 Question

A. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Al Gore really won the 2000 presidential election but was somehow cheated out of the presidency?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Total	28%	10%	15%	39%
Republican	6%	3%	8%	79%
Democrat	54%	15%	14%	13%
Independent	23%	14%	23%	31%
White	25%	10%	15%	43%
African American	68%	11%	10%	4%
Hispanic	24%	16%	21%	22%
Conservative	19%	5%	12%	58%
Moderate	28%	12%	18%	35%
Liberal	42%	20%	16%	11%
Northeast	29%	10%	18%	38%
Midwest	27%	10%	16%	40%
South	29%	10%	14%	38%
West	26%	11%	14%	39%
18-29	25%	15%	16%	37%
30-44	20%	10%	24%	38%
45-64	30%	9%	12%	41%
65 and Older	38%	9%	9%	38%
High School or Less	33%	9%	15%	33%
Some College	24%	11%	17%	45%
College Degree or More	22%	13%	14%	44%
Male	27%	12%	14%	41%
Female	29%	9%	17%	37%

Asked of 1,326 adults interviewed from March 1 through 15, 2004

Those with no opinion are not shown.

-More-

2000-2001 Questions

B. Do you accept George W. Bush as the legitimate president, or don't you feel that way?

	Yes	NO
Total	77%	21%
Republican	95%	3%
Democrat	59%	38%
Independent	81%	18%

C. In your opinion did the Supreme Court act fairly or unfairly in declaring the Florida recount unconstitutional?

	Fairly	Unfairly
Total	53%	41%
Republican	83%	13%
Democrat	27%	67%
Independent	56%	39%

D. Which comes closer to your views? Rather quickly, the American public will be able to put any bitterness from the election behind them, or it will take a long time for the American public to recover from the ill will surrounding the election,

	Quickly	Long Time
Total	52%	44%
Republican	60%	36%
Democrat	46%	50%
Independent	52%	44%

Asked of 2,704 adults interviewed from December 13, 2000 through January 19, 2001

-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 2000 survey began on Dec. 14, 1999 and continued through January 19, 2001.

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 March 1 through March 15, 2004, when 1,326 people were questioned about whether Al Gore really won the 2000 election. 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, such as Democrats or Republicans the margin of sampling error would be higher.

It also deals with interviewing conducted from December 13, 2000 through January 19, 2001, when 2,704 people were interviewed. The margin of sampling error for that data set is plus or minus two 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.

###