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### **GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE PERSISTS IN 2004, NATIONAL ANNENBERG ELECTION SURVEY SHOWS**

Men are more likely than women to know the issue positions of the presidential candidates, from their stands on taxes and assault weapons to Medicare, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

Polling conducted between September 3 and 12 among 1,845 adults showed that on an eight-item political knowledge test, men averaged 4.2 correct answers. Women on average answered 3.6 items correctly on an eight-item political knowledge test – an average difference per question of 7.5 percent.

“The fact that women are more inclined to say that they do not know the answers to political knowledge items explains in part, but not completely, the gender gap in political knowledge,” said Kate Kenski, a senior analyst at the Annenberg Public Policy Center, who conducted the research for this report. Women in the survey were more likely than men to state that they did not know the answers to the questions.

The gender gap was largest on the item asking respondents to identify which candidate supported moving sixty to seventy thousand troops from Europe and South Korea to other locations over the next decade with 60 percent of men correctly identifying Bush as the advocate of that policy, compared to 43 percent of women – a difference of 17 percentage points.

Three outcomes were analyzed in the research: answering a question correctly, giving an incorrect answer or admitting that one did not know the answer.

The item on which the gender gap was smallest was on identifying which candidate supported changing the recently passed Medicare prescription drug law to allow re-importing drugs from Canada. This item was answered correctly by 54 percent of men and 49 percent of women.

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The most difficult item on the survey asked respondents to name the income range at which John Kerry would eliminate the Bush tax cut. Respondents were offered a choice of four income levels. Only 28 percent correctly said that Kerry would eliminate the tax cut for those making over \$200,000. Thirty-three percent of men and 24 percent of women knew the answer to this question.

Kenski said that “Gender differences in political interest do not explain fully the gap in knowledge levels. While a significant difference in political interest was found on the survey, with 40 percent of men compared to 28 percent of women, stating that they were interested in government and public affairs ‘most of the time,’ the gender gap in political interest was not enough to explain the gender gap in political knowledge findings.”

“In fact,” she said “a significant gender gap in political knowledge persisted, even when political interest along with age, race, ethnicity, having children in the household, education, income, party identification, ideology, exposure to network news, cable news, and local news, newspaper reading, listening to National Public Radio or to other types of political talk radio, accessing information about the presidential candidates on the Internet, and talking about politics with family and friends, co-workers, and online were taken into consideration.”

“The research into this phenomenon, which we also saw in the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey, is hardly over,” she said. “In 2000, there was some evidence to suggest that women tend to close the knowledge gap on those issues emphasized by the campaigns as Election Day approaches and making a voting decision becomes imminent,” Kenski said.

Kate Kenski, a senior research analyst at The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, developed the research for this report. The National Annenberg Election Survey, the largest academic election poll, is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center ([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, 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. Average number of questions correct, incorrect, and don't know/refused on 8-question political knowledge test**

	<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>Male Average</b>	<b>Female Average</b>	<b>Male Average – Female Average</b>
Average number of correct answers	3.9	4.2	3.6	0.6
Average number of incorrect answers	2.6	2.5	2.7	-0.2
Average number of don't know or refused answers	1.5	1.3	1.7	-0.4

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## B. Individual Political Knowledge Item Responses by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Who favors allowing workers to invest some of their Social Security contributions in the stock market – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Bush)			
<b>Correct</b>	55%	43%	49%
<b>Incorrect</b>	33%	36%	34%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	12%	22%	17%
Who urges Congress to extend the federal law banning assault weapons – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Kerry)			
<b>Correct</b>	49%	40%	44%
<b>Incorrect</b>	37%	40%	39%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	14%	20%	17%
Who favors completely eliminating the estate tax, that is the tax on property left by people who die – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Bush)			
<b>Correct</b>	44%	34%	39%
<b>Incorrect</b>	33%	38%	36%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	22%	28%	25%
Who favors changing the recently passed Medicare prescription drug law to allow re-importing drugs from Canada – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Kerry)			
<b>Correct</b>	54%	49%	51%
<b>Incorrect</b>	31%	31%	31%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	15%	19%	18%
John Kerry says that he would eliminate the Bush tax cuts on those making how much money: Over 50,000 a year, over 100,000 a year, over 200,000 a year, over 500,000 a year. (CORRECT ANSWER: over 200,000 a year)			
<b>Correct</b>	33%	24%	28%
<b>Incorrect</b>	48%	46%	47%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	20%	30%	25%
Who favors making the recent tax cuts permanent – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Bush)			
<b>Correct</b>	70%	59%	64%
<b>Incorrect</b>	21%	26%	24%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	9%	15%	12%
Who wants to make it easier for labor unions to organize – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Kerry)			
<b>Correct</b>	65%	57%	61%
<b>Incorrect</b>	24%	24%	24%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	11%	20%	15%
Which candidate proposes moving sixty to seventy thousand troops stationed in Europe and South Korea to other locations, including the United States, in the next decade – George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither? (CORRECT ANSWER: Bush)			
<b>Correct</b>	60%	43%	51%
<b>Incorrect</b>	29%	40%	35%
<b>Don't Know/Refused</b>	11%	18%	14%

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### C. Political Interest by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Some people seem to follow what is going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election or not. Others are not that interested, or are interested in other things. Would you say you follow what is going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?			
<b>Most of the time</b>	40%	28%	34%
<b>Some of the time</b>	36%	35%	36%
<b>Only now and then</b>	16%	26%	21%
<b>Hardly at all</b>	8%	9%	9%
Would you say you have been very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested in the presidential campaign so far this year?			
<b>Very much interested</b>	57%	52%	54%
<b>Somewhat interested</b>	30%	34%	32%
<b>Not much interested</b>	12%	14%	13%

## 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.

From September 3 through 12, 1,845 adults were interviewed. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, 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 men and for women it would be plus or minus three percentage points.

Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would lead to higher potential 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.

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