



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Few American Voters Ever Changed Their Minds,
National Annenberg Election Survey Shows**

Very few American voters changed their minds during the 2004 presidential campaign, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election survey shows.

Just 16 percent of those who voted for George W. Bush said there was "ever a time" when they thought they would vote for John Kerry. And 15 percent of Kerry voters said there was "ever a time" when they thought they would vote for Bush. Put another way, 84 percent of Bush voters and 85 percent of Kerry voters said they never thought they would vote for the other candidate.

Adam Clymer, political director of the survey, said comparable data from past elections is hard to find. But one Fox News/Opinion Dynamics survey in 2000 found that 80 percent of Bush supporters never thought of supporting another candidate, as did 76 percent of Al Gore voters. But the timing of that survey, shortly before Election Day in a campaign marked by last-minute shifts, Clymer said, may have overstated the percentages who never switched.

Clymer said the Annenberg data vindicated the campaign strategy of playing to the base and spending relatively less time and money on undecided voters or soft supporters of the other candidate. He said the Bush campaign was especially skillful at implementing that strategy.

Another finding of the post-election survey of 8,664 adults who had already been interviewed once before Election Day was that the public gave the Bush campaign less credit for honesty than it gave the Kerry campaign.

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Respondents were asked to rate the honesty of the campaigns on a scale of zero to ten. The average for the Bush campaign was 6.8 and for the Kerry campaign it was 7.2. Bush voters gave his campaign less credit for honesty than Kerry voters gave his. Bush voters rated their campaign at an average of 8.4, while Kerry supporters rated his at 9.1. There was less difference in how they rated the opposition. Bush voters gave Kerry's campaign a 5.4 average; Kerry's gave the Bush campaign a 5.2.

There was little evidence of post-election reconciliation in the survey, which was conducted from November 4 through December 28. Kerry voters were asked whether they agreed with the statement: "Even though I voted for John Kerry, George Bush will probably be a good president in his second term."

Only 2 percent strongly agreed and 13 percent somewhat agreed. Fifteen percent somewhat disagreed and 67 percent strongly disagreed. This was a substantially more negative result than Annenberg found from November 3 through 11. At that time, 5 percent of Kerry voters strongly agreed and 25 percent somewhat agreed. Thirteen percent somewhat disagreed and 53 percent strongly disagreed.

Nor were Kerry voters much more reconciled to the idea that their votes had been counted properly. In this survey, 53 percent of Kerry voters said they were "very confident" their votes had been accurately counted, about the same as the 53 percent who said that in the November 3-11 polling. Among Bush voters, 86 percent said they were "very confident" their votes had been counted accurately, up from 62 percent just after the election. For all voters, the figure was 70 percent

The margin of sampling error for all respondents was plus or minus one percentage point. For either Bush or Kerry voters, it was plus or minus two percentage points.

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.

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Table

	Bush voters	Kerry Voters	All voters
Ever thought would vote for other candidate	16%	15%	15%
Never	84%	85%	84%
Rate honesty of Bush campaign on 0-10 scale	8.4	5.2	6.8
Rate honesty of Kerry campaign on 0-10 scale	5.4	9.1	7.2
Confidence that vote was accurately counted			
Very confident	86%	53%	70%
Somewhat Confident	10%	25%	17%
Somewhat Doubtful	2%	12%	6%
Very doubtful	1%	7%	4%
Voted for candidates of both parties	52%	43%	48%
Voted only for candidates of presidential nominee's party	45%	54%	50%

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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 81,422 telephone interviews which began October 7, 2003 and concluded on November 16, 2004.

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 interviews with 8,664 adults conducted between November 4 and December 28, 2004. Each of those had been interviewed before the election, but this report deals only with their post-election answers.

In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, results for the entire group would differ by one percentage point, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all Americans. For smaller subgroups the margin of sampling error would be higher; for Bush voters or Kerry voters it would be 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.

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