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**Public Considers Bush A Stronger Leader But More Stubborn
While Kerry Is Seen As Less Reckless But Inconsistent,
National Annenberg Election Survey Data Show**

Americans consider President Bush steadier, a stronger leader, more likeable and less likely to bow to political pressure than Senator John F. Kerry. But they consider Kerry more knowledgeable than Bush and less reckless or stubborn, too, according to the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey.

In polling conducted between March 21 and April 7, a total of 1,818 respondents were asked to rank Bush and Kerry on 17 different traits, and Bush held statistically significant advantages on seven of them, while Kerry had an advantage on four.

A similar pattern appeared among respondents from the 18 battleground states considered close enough for both sides to be spending on television advertisements. Bush had a statistically significant advantage on six traits and Kerry on four.

But among "persuadable" voters, the approximately one ninth of the public who called themselves undecided or said they preferred one candidate but there was a "good chance" they might switch to another, Bush's edge disappeared. Among those "persuadables," Kerry held statistically significant advantages on eight traits and Bush had an advantage on three. (A table showing average ratings for the public generally, those in the 18 battleground states combined, and "persuadable" respondents is below.)

One characteristic in particular emphasized the difference between the public as a whole and the "persuadables." The Bush campaign has used heavy advertising to paint Kerry as inconsistent or self-contradictory, and respondents were asked to say how well the phrase "says one thing, does another" applied to each candidates, using a zero to ten scale, with zero meaning it did not apply at all and ten meaning that it was a perfect description.

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Among all respondents, the description was thought to fit Kerry better. Kerry was rated at an average of 5.32, and Bush lower, at 4.84. But the “persuadables” thought the image of inconsistency or hypocrisy fit Bush better, rating him at an average of 5.79 and Kerry lower, at 5.10. In the 18 states where ads are being broadcast, Bush held a slight edge but it was not statistically significant.

Among all respondents, Bush’s biggest advantage was on the phrase “will make tough decisions despite political pressure.” The public rated him at 6.24, and Kerry only at 5.03. It was also his biggest edge in the 18 battleground states, where he was rated at 6.02 and Kerry at 4.76.

Kerry’s biggest advantage among all respondents came when they were asked how well the term “stubborn” applied to the candidates. Bush was rated at 6.70, the highest average rating for either candidate on any question, and Kerry at 5.02. Kerry also had a major advantage on the question of whether respondents considered a candidate “reckless.” Bush was rated at 4.72 among all respondents and Kerry at 3.97.

Kerry’s advantages on recklessness were even greater among “persuadables” and respondents in the 18 battleground states. Among persuadables, Bush was rated at 5.10 on recklessness and Kerry at 3.80. In the states where ads are being shown, Bush was rated at 4.96 on recklessness and Kerry at 3.96.

There were several traits on which neither candidate held a statistically significant advantage among all respondents. One in particular marked a success of a sort for Bush. Democrats traditionally have an edge over Republicans on the question of whether poll respondents think they “care about people like me.” But Kerry’s modest edge, 5.21 to 4.95, was not outside sampling error.

But another very close score appeared to be good news for Kerry. Asked how well the term “has the right kind of experience to be president,” a characteristic that incumbents normally expect to be self-evident, respondents gave Bush an average rating of 5.70, and Kerry a 5.58.

Among the “persuadables,” Bush’s biggest advantage was on “has a clear vision of where he wants to lead the country.” The “persuadables” rated him at 6.64 and Kerry at 5.79. Bush also led among all respondents and in the battleground states on this item.

Kerry’s biggest advantages among the “persuadables” and in the 18 battleground states came again on the question of being “stubborn.” Bush was rated 6.87 and Kerry at 5.13 among the uncommitted or weakly committed respondents. In the battleground states, Bush was rated at 6.79 and Kerry at 5.24.

The states where ads are being broadcast are: Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

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.

Table

I am going to read you some phrases. For each one, please tell me how well that phrase applies to [George W. Bush/John Kerry]. Please use a scale from zero to ten, where “zero” means it does not apply at all and “ten” means it applies extremely well.

March 21 – April 7	All Respondents		States with TV Ads		Persuadable Voters	
	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Kerry
Cares about people like me	4.95	5.21	4.80	5.08	4.80	5.34
Inspiring	4.98	4.79	4.90	4.67	4.76	5.03
Strong leader	6.10	5.48	5.95	5.29	6.21	5.69
Trustworthy	5.26	5.13	5.20	4.98	4.68	5.02
Shares my values	5.15	4.89	5.04	4.71	4.82	5.13
Knowledgeable	5.94	6.34	5.84	6.02	5.61	6.51
Reckless	4.72	3.97	4.96	3.96	5.10	3.80
Steady	6.00	5.27	6.10	4.98	6.09	5.54
Says one thing, does another	4.84	5.32	4.86	5.20	5.79	5.10
Has the right kind of experience to be president	5.70	5.58	5.72	5.44	5.55	5.73
Easy to like as a person	5.92	5.50	5.95	5.39	5.45	5.78
Will make tough decisions despite political pressure	6.24	5.03	6.02	4.76	6.04	5.37
Has a clear vision of where he wants to lead the country	6.22	5.62	6.22	5.39	6.64	5.79
Changes his mind for political reasons	5.22	5.88	5.13	5.72	5.84	5.23
Out of touch with people like me	5.10	4.93	5.25	4.80	5.60	4.65
Stubborn	6.70	5.02	6.79	5.24	6.87	5.13
Arrogant	5.68	4.88	5.60	4.85	5.99	4.39

Note. Cells in white on black indicate differences beyond sampling error. Means apply to those answering questions about both candidates.

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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 of 1,818 people between March 21, 2004 and April 7, 2004. There were 687 people in the 18 states where campaign ads are being broadcast and 211 used as a sample of persuadables. Not every respondent was given every question. Results are reported as statistically significant, when in 95 cases out of 100 the difference in means would not be due to sampling error. Sampling error will vary from question to question depending on the variation in the answers and the number of people asked.

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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