



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 3, 2004

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

VISIT: www.naes04.org

**Fahrenheit 9/11 Viewers and Limbaugh Listeners
About Equal in Size Even Though They Perceive
Two Different Nations, Annenberg Data Show**

Michael Moore's movie, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, has attracted about as many people as Rush Limbaugh's radio broadcasts, but the election-year film appears to have hardly changed any minds, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

Forty-one percent of the Moore movie goers said the picture made them think worse of George W. Bush. But that claim must be treated skeptically because three fifths of the people who said the film made them think less of Bush were Democrats to begin with. While a third of the independents who saw the movie said it made them think worse of Bush, those independents who watched the movie were much more liberal than independents generally and had been three times more likely to back Al Gore than Bush in 2000. Only a handful of Republicans saw the movie; they were too few for their attitudes to be measured with confidence.

In all, about 8 percent of the public said they had watched Moore's movie, which is very critical of Bush. Seven percent in the July 5-25 polling of 5,051 adults said they had listened to Limbaugh, who is strongly supportive of Bush, sometime in the previous week. For results about each group, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus five percentage points.

Thirteen percent of the Moore movie watchers said they approved of how Bush was handling his job as president, while 86 percent disapproved. Eighty-three percent said the war in Iraq had not been worth it, and 85 percent said it had increased the risk of terrorism in the United States. Fifty-five percent said they were Democrats and 10 percent said they were Republicans. The Moore watchers liked John Kerry, Bush's Democratic challenger, with 70 percent offering a favorable opinion of him and 17 percent an unfavorable opinion. Kerry does not appear in *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

-More-

At the other end of the political spectrum, the Limbaugh listeners, 88 percent approved of Bush's job performance, while 12 percent disapproved. Eighty-two percent said the war in Iraq had been worth it, and 68 percent said it had reduced the risk of terrorism in the United States. Sixty-nine percent said they were Republicans and 9 percent said they were Democrats. They had little use for Kerry; 15 percent had a favorable opinion and 78 percent an unfavorable opinion.

“What Limbaugh and Moore have done is find the hard-core partisan audience,” said Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the survey and of its parent Annenberg Public Policy Center. “One-sided partisan communication tends to attract an audience of believers and reinforces their beliefs rather than change their minds. Even when such communication attracts people who know they will disagree but want to see what the other side is saying, it tends to reinforce their partisanship because they develop counter arguments.”

Talia Jomini, a doctoral candidate at Penn's Annenberg School for Communication who analyzed the data, pointed out that even when it came to reinforcement, “the relative impact of Moore's movie compared to Limbaugh's radio broadcasts must be put into perspective. Limbaugh is on the air three hours a day, five days a week. Even if Moore's effort has the added impact of visual effects, it only lasts one hour and fifty-six minutes.”

In view of the huge differences of opinion between the two audiences for political messages, it is hardly surprising that there was barely any overlap. Twelve people, or about one quarter of one percent of all respondents said they both listened to Limbaugh and had seen *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

Darin Decator, a 35-year-old Michigan resident and a District Executive for the Boy Scouts of America, was one of these individuals. When asked about his opinions on Rush Limbaugh and Michael Moore, he said that “neither really impressed me all that much.” He was motivated to pay attention to both, he said because “you need to listen to both sides to make a valid judgment. There are different sides to everything and there's a truth somewhere in the middle.”

A frequent Limbaugh listener, a 37-year-old office worker from South Dakota, was particularly unimpressed with Moore's film. Although she said she went to the film knowing that it “was going to be one-sided,” she said she wanted to “see it for myself, to make my own conclusions.” Her disagreement with the film? She said that she found that Moore “would only show bits and pieces of the story – his perspective seemed more like a spoof.” While both of these respondents said that Moore's film represented a different perspective, neither found it persuasive.

Limbaugh listeners had a positive outlook about the country's direction – nearly three fourths (74%) felt that the country was generally going in the right direction. In contrast, 81 percent of *Fahrenheit 9/11* viewers felt that things in this country were seriously off on the wrong track.

-More-

Demographically, Limbaugh listeners tended to be older and to attend religious services more often compared to their *Fahrenheit 9/11* counterparts. More females, African Americans, and Latinos made up the *Fahrenheit 9/11* audience in comparison to the Limbaugh audience.

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-

Opinions on Political Issues

%	Listened to Limbaugh in past week	Watched Fahrenheit 9/11	All Respondents
Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?			
Right direction	74%	13%	36%
Wrong track	19%	81%	55%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?			
Approve	88%	13%	49%
Disapprove	12%	86%	49%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the nation's economy?			
Approve	85%	15%	44%
Disapprove	13%	82%	52%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the war on terrorism?			
Approve	86%	15%	49%
Disapprove	14%	83%	48%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is currently handling the situation in Iraq?			
Approve	83%	12%	40%
Disapprove	15%	87%	56%
All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not?			
Worth It	82%	14%	41%
Not Worth It	15%	83%	54%
Has the war in Iraq reduced the risk of terrorism or increased the risk of terrorism?			
Reduced the risk	68%	9%	27%
Increased the risk	23%	85%	62%
Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until a stable government is established there, or do you think the U.S. should bring its troops home as soon as possible?			
Keep troops in Iraq	87%	47%	51%
Bring troops home	12%	49%	45%
Bush Favorability			
Unfavorable	7%	82%	41%
Favorable	90%	14%	46%
Kerry Favorability			
Unfavorable	78%	17%	31%
Favorable	15%	70%	43%

-More-

Demographics & Political Orientations

%	Listened to Limbaugh in past week	Watched Fahrenheit 9/11	All Respondents
Men	68%	53%	48%
Women	32%	47%	52%
Whites	92%	82%	81%
African Americans	2%	12%	11%
Latinos	3%	6%	12%
Attend religious services			
More than once a week	18%	5%	13%
Once a week	34%	18%	27%
One or twice a month	14%	12%	14%
A few times a year	20%	33%	27%
Never	15%	31%	19%
High school or less	31%	28%	47%
Some college	31%	31%	27%
College degree or more	37%	41%	26%
18-29 years old	9%	32%	21%
30-44	29%	27%	31%
45-64	45%	27%	32%
65 and over	16%	13%	16%
Household income below \$35,000	17%	22%	34%
\$35,000 to less than \$75,000	38%	37%	33%
\$75,000 and over	37%	32%	24%
Union household	16%	20%	16%
Northeast	17%	27%	22%
Midwest	25%	20%	23%
South	37%	27%	34%
West	21%	26%	22%
Republican	69%	10%	29%
Democrat	9%	55%	33%
Independent	19%	24%	26%
Conservative	73%	14%	38%
Moderate	19%	38%	37%
Liberal	7%	47%	22%

-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 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 conducted from July 5 through 25, 2004. In that period, 5,051 adults were interviewed, of whom 432 said they had seen the movie, Fahrenheit 9/11, and 395 said they had listened to Rush Limbaugh's radio program at least once in the previous week. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, results for all respondents will differ by no more than one percentage point, 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 the movie goers or the radio listeners it would be plus or minus five 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.

If you would like to be removed from this press release list, please call or email Jennifer Wilhelm at jwilhelm@asc.upenn.edu or (202) 879-6747.

###