



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Majority Considers Bush Ads' 9/11 Images "Inappropriate,"
National Annenberg Election Survey Shows**

A majority of the American public considers it inappropriate for President Bush's re-election campaign to use images from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in its television commercials, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

While the heaviest criticism came from committed supporters of John Kerry, there was also significant unhappiness about the ads among voters who have not yet firmly decided for whom to vote.

Pictures of the damage to New York City were shown in one of the campaign's first television commercials, and a picture of firefighters carrying a flag-draped stretcher out of the rubble were used in another. Democrats have attacked the ads as a tasteless politicizing of a national tragedy. Republicans have said they reflect the seriousness of terrorism and Bush's leadership. The ads have been shown in battleground states and widely carried in television news programs.

Fifty-five percent said they found the ad showing the city damage inappropriate, while 41 percent said it was appropriate. Fifty-four percent found the ad showing the firefighters and the flag inappropriate and 37 percent said it was appropriate.

Respondents among the 1,265 people polled from March 5 through 11 were asked about one ad or the other, not about both. In all 54 percent found the ad they were asked about inappropriate, and 39 percent found it appropriate. The margin of sampling error for the entire sample is plus or minus three percentage points. For the groups asked about each ad it is plus or minus four percentage points.

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There was a strong partisan element to the responses, as 67 percent of Republicans found the ad they were asked about appropriate, and 27 percent found it inappropriate. Among Democrats, 73 percent said “inappropriate” and 21 percent said “appropriate.” Independents were about as negative as the public as a whole, with 56 percent saying the ad they were asked about was inappropriate and 37 percent saying it was appropriate.

Adam Clymer, political director of the survey, said the most important respondents were the minority who had not yet made a choice between Bush and Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, or had made one but said there was a “good chance” they could change their minds.

He said “Those ‘persuadables’ were less hostile to the ads than the public generally, but a significant share of them objected.” In that group, 52 percent found the ads inappropriate, while 27 percent said they were appropriate. That group was younger than the public as a whole. It also gave Bush a 68 percent approval rating on his handling of his job as president, compared to 55 percent from the public generally.

Clymer said respondents who called the ads “very inappropriate” might be more likely to have them affect their vote than those who approved of them or were only somewhat critical. Thirty percent of the “persuadables” called the ad they were asked about “very inappropriate.” So did 54 percent of Democrats, 11 percent of Republicans and 36 percent of independents. In the public as a whole, 35 percent said the ad they were asked about was “very inappropriate.”

Other groups most likely to call the ads “very inappropriate” were African-Americans (55 percent), liberals (51 percent), people with household incomes below \$35,000 (42 percent), and those 65 and older (44 percent).

Those most likely to say the ads were “very appropriate” were Republicans (35 percent), conservatives (24 percent) and those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more (22 percent). In all, 16 percent of the public said they were “very appropriate.” There were only slight differences of opinion, most of them statistically insignificant, between people who said they had seen the ads, as opposed to those who had only heard or read about them or had no knowledge of them. Twenty-one percent of those who had seen the ads called them “very appropriate,” compared to 13 percent of everyone else. And 37 percent of those who had seen the ads said they were “very inappropriate,” compared to 34 percent of everyone else.

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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.

Questions

A. Have you seen, heard or read about George W. Bush's new television ads for his re-election campaign?

| | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Yes, Seen ads | 39% |
| Yes, Heard or read about ads | 21% |
| No, haven't seen, heard, or read | 39% |

Those with no opinion are not shown.

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B. As you may know, one of those television ads shows pictures of the damage in New York when terrorists attacked on September 11th, 2001. How appropriate do you think it is to show these pictures in the ads?

| % | Very Appropriate | Somewhat Appropriate | Somewhat Inappropriate | Very Inappropriate |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Total | 18% | 23% | 18% | 36% |
| Republican | 41% | 28% | 15% | 13% |
| Democrat | 8% | 15% | 19% | 54% |
| Independent | 12% | 29% | 19% | 35% |
| Conservative | 30% | 28% | 20% | 16% |
| Moderate | 10% | 24% | 18% | 46% |
| Liberal | 12% | 16% | 18% | 50% |
| North East | 14% | 18% | 19% | 45% |
| Mid-West | 17% | 21% | 17% | 36% |
| South | 19% | 28% | 19% | 32% |
| West | 23% | 23% | 18% | 35% |
| High School or Less | 15% | 23% | 16% | 41% |
| Some College | 19% | 19% | 16% | 42% |
| College Degree or More | 22% | 28% | 25% | 23% |
| Less than \$35,000 | 12% | 27% | 17% | 41% |
| \$35,000 to \$75,000 | 16% | 23% | 17% | 39% |
| \$75,000 or More | 25% | 21% | 21% | 29% |
| 18-29 | 14% | 24% | 12% | 45% |
| 30-44 | 18% | 26% | 24% | 28% |
| 45-64 | 20% | 21% | 18% | 37% |
| 65 and older | 22% | 20% | 16% | 39% |
| Male | 21% | 20% | 19% | 36% |
| Female | 16% | 26% | 18% | 37% |

608 respondents were asked this question.

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C. As you may know, one of those television ads shows a picture of firefighters carrying a body covered with the American flag at the site of the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York. How appropriate do you think it is to show this picture in the ads?

| % | Very Appropriate | Somewhat Appropriate | Somewhat Inappropriate | Very Inappropriate |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Total | 14% | 24% | 20% | 34% |
| Republican | 30% | 35% | 19% | 8% |
| Democrat | 4% | 16% | 20% | 53% |
| Independent | 13% | 21% | 21% | 36% |
| Conservative | 19% | 31% | 16% | 22% |
| Moderate | 13% | 23% | 24% | 34% |
| Liberal | 8% | 11% | 19% | 53% |
| North East | 13% | 24% | 21% | 33% |
| Mid-West | 14% | 25% | 23% | 34% |
| South | 17% | 19% | 16% | 36% |
| West | 11% | 28% | 22% | 30% |
| High School or Less | 14% | 20% | 19% | 36% |
| Some College | 10% | 32% | 20% | 34% |
| College Degree or More | 19% | 20% | 22% | 29% |
| Less than \$35,000 | 11% | 19% | 19% | 43% |
| \$35,000 to \$75,000 | 16% | 26% | 18% | 29% |
| \$75,000 or More | 19% | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| 18-29 | 9% | 29% | 29% | 27% |
| 30-44 | 15% | 24% | 24% | 29% |
| 45-64 | 14% | 25% | 17% | 34% |
| 65 and older | 19% | 15% | 10% | 47% |
| Male | 16% | 21% | 18% | 33% |
| Female | 12% | 26% | 22% | 34% |

657 respondents were asked this question.

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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 conducted between March 5 and March 11, when 1,265 people were interviewed. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results will differ by no more than three percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults. For smaller subgroups, such as Republicans or Democrats, the margin of sampling error would be higher. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would lead to a larger potential sampling 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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