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## **Which Will Drive the Midterm Vote: Bush's Recovering Standing, or Consumers' Continuing Concerns?**

### **Congressional Party Control Preference All Tied Up Again, After Democrats Took the Lead in August**

*Between September 3 and September 5, 2002 and between September 16 and September 19, 2002, Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs interviewed a representative sample of 2,000 adults nationwide, including 1,527 registered voters. The margin of error for the combined surveys is  $\pm 2.2\%$  for all adults and  $\pm 2.5\%$  for registered voters.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, (September 20, 2002) — President George W. Bush's re-elect score has been declining all summer along with (1.) a serious erosion in consumer attitudes, followed by (2.) a persistent decline in the political fortunes of Bush and the Republicans in Congress. Even though consumer attitudes have not recovered in September and continue to decline on a few key measures, Bush's approval ratings have recovered slightly after weeks of war talk, as has sentiment favoring his own re-election.

The combination of persistent consumer concerns on some key issues with a rallying perception of the President's performance seems to be a recipe for a close midterm election, according to the latest Ipsos-Reid/*Cook Political Report* polls conducted September 3-5 and September 16-19, 2002 with a total representative sample of 2,000 adults and 1,527 registered voters.

Overall, between September 3-19, registered voters prefer that Democrats (45%) rather than Republicans (42%) win control of Congress.

Among 897 likely voters in the September surveys, 45% prefer Republicans, 44% Democrats.

In the most recent poll (746 registered voters), conducted Monday through Thursday, September 16-19, 2002, the Republicans have once again pulled into a tie with Democrats, with 43% of registered voters preferring Republicans win control of Congress and 44% preferring Democratic control in this week's survey.

## Congressional Party Control Preference

In the most recent surveys, conducted in September, registered voters divide by gender, age and region, with 30-39 year olds and Southerners the most evenly divided.

***And if the election for Congress were held today, would you want to see the Republicans or Democrats win control of Congress?***

Registered voters

	Total	Gender		Age						Gender/Age			
		Male	Female	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Men 18-44	Men 45+	Women 18-44	Women 45+
Republicans	42%	<b>50%</b>	35%	<b>48%</b>	46%	38%	42%	41%	38%	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>	36%	34%
Democrats	45%	37%	<b>52%</b>	41%	44%	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>50%</b>	35%	40%	<b>53%</b>	<b>52%</b>
Neither	9%	10%	8%	7%	6%	13%	8%	8%	7%	8%	11%	8%	8%
(DK/NS)	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	4%	2%	3%	6%

Registered voters

	Total	Region			
		Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Republicans	42%	38%	39%	44%	<b>48%</b>
Democrats	45%	<b>48%</b>	<b>48%</b>	45%	39%
Neither	9%	8%	8%	8%	10%
(DK/NS)	4%	6%	5%	3%	3%

Other key findings on Congressional party control preference:

- ❑ Republicans hold a lead among white registered voters (49%-40%), while trailing Democrats among African Americans (83%-3%) and Hispanic voters (58%-27%).
- ❑ White voters divide sharply by age, however, with whites under age 45 strongly Republican (54%-36%) and whites age 45 and older evenly divided (44%-44%).

**Bush Approval Ratings Fell This Summer, and Now Have Recovered  
But Concerns on Household Spending, Job Security and Investment Persist:  
Which Will Have More of an Impact on Voting in November?**

Approval of Bush's handling of the economy and his handling of other domestic issues have recovered somewhat after hitting bottom in August. At the same time as Bush has recovered his footing somewhat and regained some standing lost over the summer, the key consumer measures that declined this summer have failed to recover, and some continue to decline. The result: A dead heat on Congressional party preference.

Compared to 6 months ago, are you NOW more or less comfortable making a major purchase, like a home or car?

ALL ADULTS					
	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
More comfortable .....	33	31	32	36	34
Less comfortable .....	48	48	48	43	45
No change (VOL) .....	18	20	19	19	20
Not sure .....	1	1	1	2	1

Compared to 6 months ago, are you NOW more or less comfortable making other household purchases?

	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
More comfortable .....	38	37	40	43	41
Less comfortable .....	44	43	41	36	38
No change (VOL) .....	17	20	18	20	21
Not sure .....	1	-	1	1	1

Compared to 6 months ago, are you NOW more or less confident about job security for yourself, your family and other people you know personally?

	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
More confident .....	39	39	40	42	39
Less confident .....	45	44	44	41	45
No change (VOL) .....	15	16	14	15	15
Not sure .....	1	1	2	2	2

Compared to 6 months ago, are you NOW more or less confident of your ability to invest in the future, including your ability to save money for your retirement or your children's education?

	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
More confident .....	37	38	37	44	42
Less confident .....	49	47	49	39	40
No change (VOL) .....	12	13	12	15	16
Not sure .....	2	2	2	2	2

In the Ipsos-Reid/*Cook Political Report* polls this summer, Bush approval ratings on his overall job performance and handling of foreign policy have remained quite high. His scores on handling the economy and handling other domestic issues fell sharply, however. All Bush approval ratings have stabilized or improved in September after a deep August dip, as has his re-elect rating.

**Bush Ratings: Overall Job Approval, Approval of Handling of Issues, and Re-Elect Score for Bush**

If the election were held today, would you ...

	REGISTERED VOTERS				
	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
Definitely vote to reelect Bush as President	44	46	41	50	54
Consider voting for someone else ....	28	27	28	25	24
Definitely vote for someone else .....	24	24	28	22	20
Not sure .....	4	3	3	3	2

Overall, do you approve, disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK: )** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	REGISTERED VOTERS				
	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
Strongly approve.....	35	39	32	41	50
Somewhat approve.....	16	15	16	19	16
Lean toward approval ...	14	12	16	13	11
Still have mixed feelings	2	2	3	2	2
Lean toward disapproval	14	15	13	12	10
Somewhat disapprove ..	5	4	5	4	3
Strongly disapprove .....	13	13	15	9	7
Not sure .....	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Approve.....</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Total Disapprove.....</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>

And when it comes to **(READ ISSUE)** do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling that issue?

REGISTERED VOTERS										
	Strongly Ap- prove	Some- what Ap- prove	Lean Toward Ap- proval	Still Have Mixed Feelings	Lean Toward Disap- proval	Some- what Disap- prove	Strongly Disap- prove	Not Sure	Total Ap- prove	Total Disap- prove
<b>Handling the economy</b>										
9/3-19/02 .....	23	20	14	2	12	9	19	1	57	40
9/16-19/02 .....	23	19	15	2	13	9	18	1	57	40
8/2-18/02 .....	20	17	16	3	14	9	20	1	53	43
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter AMJ 02 .....	27	23	12	2	12	8	15	1	63	34
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter JFM 02 .....	31	21	14	2	11	7	14	1	66	32
<b>Handling domestic issues like health care, education, the environment and energy</b>										
9/3-19/02 .....	21	19	16	3	12	8	20	1	56	41
9/16-19/02 .....	20	17	17	3	13	8	21	1	54	42
8/2-18/02 .....	19	17	14	3	15	9	22	1	51	46
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter AMJ 02 .....	22	20	14	3	13	8	19	1	56	40
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter JFM 02 .....	25	20	16	2	12	7	17	1	61	36
<b>Handling foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism</b>										
9/3-19/02 .....	44	12	12	2	12	5	12	1	68	29
9/16-19/02 .....	46	11	12	2	12	5	11	1	68	29
8/2-18/02 .....	41	15	12	3	12	5	11	1	69	28
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter AMJ 02 .....	47	16	11	2	10	4	9	1	74	23
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter JFM 02 .....	59	14	10	1	7	2	6	-	83	15

### Right Direction-Wrong Track

American adults are evenly divided between 47% who feel things are headed in the right direction and 47% who say things are off on the wrong track, in a survey of 2,000 adults. That is unchanged from an August poll, at 46%-48%, and down from 54% right direction-39% wrong track in six surveys with 6,000 adults conducted in April, May and June.

Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?

ALL ADULTS					
	9/3- 19/02	9/16- 19/02	8/2- 18/02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02
Right direction .....	47	50	46	54	63
Wrong track .....	47	44	48	39	32
Not sure .....	6	6	6	7	5

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#### **About Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs**

*The survey was conducted by Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs, the Washington, D.C.-based division of Ipsos, which is the world's fourth largest polling and market research organization, based in Paris. Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective public affairs research organization made up of Democratic and Republican campaign and political polling veterans. It was established in Washington in August 2001, and it is led by Thomas Riehle, who has more than 15 years of experience as a political pollster in Washington. The Ipsos-Reid/Cook Political Report poll and the Ipsos-Reid Consumer Attitudes and Spending by Household (CASH) Index poll are conducted the first and third week of every month, as part of Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs weekly omnibus polling service.*

*The political survey is designed in conjunction with Charlie Cook of the Cook Political Report. Founded in 1984, The Cook Political Report is an independent, non-partisan newsletter that analyzes elections for the U.S. House, Senate, governor and President as well as domestic American political trends. The New York Times has called the publication, "a newsletter that both parties consider authoritative" while the dean of the Washington political press corps, the Washington Post's David Broder has called Charlie Cook, its editor and publisher, "perhaps the best political handicapper in the nation." Cook also writes two weekly columns that appear in National Journal magazine and CongressDaily/AM and on nationaljournal.com, and serves as a political analyst for Cable News Network's show "Inside Politics." Researched and written by a staff of five based in Washington, D.C., the Cook Political Report's subscribers are primarily the lobbyists and managers for the political action committees of the nation's major corporations, trade associations and labor unions as well as by news organizations, foreign governments and others with an interest in detailed, impartial information and analysis of Congressional, gubernatorial and presidential elections.*