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The Do-It-Yourself Election

Democrats Fail to Turn Economic Distress into Votes for a New Economic Policy; Republicans Fail to Turn Bush Job Scores into Preference for Republican Congress; Parties Leave Voters to Figure It Out for Themselves

Between October 28 and November 3, 2002, Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs interviewed a representative sample of 2,000 adults nationwide, including 1,518 registered voters and 1,001 likely voters. The margin of error for the combined surveys is $\pm 2.2\%$ for all adults, $\pm 2.6\%$ for registered voters and $\pm 3.1\%$ for likely voters.

WASHINGTON, D.C., (November 4, 2002) — Likely voters are split, with 46% preferring Republicans to control Congress after tomorrow's elections, 44% Democrats, and a whopping 10% still undecided or unsure, according to the final Ipsos-Reid/*Cook Political Report* Poll of the 2002 election cycle.

Among all registered voters, Democrats lead, 45% to 43%, but it is unlikely that anything like all registered voters will participate. Turnout will determine which party wins. Likely voters are those who say they are extremely likely to vote. Very Likely Voters express extreme likelihood for voting, and high interest in following election news. Hardcore Voters express extreme likelihood of voting, and extremely high interest.

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

	October 28- November 3		
	All Likely Voters (66% of Registered Voters)	Very Likely Voters (42% of Registered Voters)	Hardcore Voters (29% of Registered Voters)
Republicans	46%	47%	44%
Democrats	44%	45%	47%
Neither	7%	6%	6%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%

Turnout

Low turnout favors Republicans, up to a point.

- ❑ Among all registered voters, Democrats lead, 45%-43%, but Republicans lead, 46%-44% among Likely Voters.
- ❑ Very Likely Voters, representing 41% of all registered voters, approximate a normal midterm election turnout. Republicans also lead by an insignificant two percentage points, 47%-45% among these Very Likely Voters.
- ❑ Hardcore Voters represent the 28% of registered voters who are certain to vote. If they are the only ones who show up to vote, Democrats hold a nominal (statistically insignificant) lead of 47% Democrat to 44% Republican.

Undecided Voters

Undecided voters reflect the ambivalence of the overall electorate. Many self-professed Likely Voters who remain undecided in the final week before Election Day will fail to vote. Some will drag themselves to the polls and do something, however, and in a race this close, their opinions matter. Undecided voters can be described as follows:

- ❑ Only half (51%) are extremely likely to vote—many will fail to vote.
- ❑ Say the country is on the wrong track (57%), while (32%) say it is heading in the right direction.
- ❑ In their overall party preference, 21% are Republicans, 27% Democrats, and 47% are truly Independent, with the rest not sure.
- ❑ Approve of Bush's overall performance as President (57% approve-35% disapprove), although they are split on his handling of the economy (47% approve-44% disapprove). They feel better about his handling of other domestic issues (48%-40%) and foreign policy and the war on terrorism (59%-33%).
- ❑ Only 34% would definitely vote to reelect Bush, 36% would consider someone else, but only 24% definitely would vote for someone else.
- ❑ They are middle-aged, with two-in-three (67%) age 35-64, compared to 57% of all registered voters. Few undecided are among the oldest or youngest voters.
- ❑ They tend to be slightly less-well-educated than all registered voters, with slightly lower incomes—although half (48%) are investors and two-thirds (69%) are homeowners.
- ❑ They include men (47%) and women (53%), in a representative distribution by region and by urban-suburban-rural types of places to live.

Final Weekend Trends

Among Likely Voters and Very Likely Voters, here are comparisons between the interviews conducted last week, October 28-31, and this past weekend, November 1-3. What trend we see in recent days among the larger group of Likely Voters and the more narrow definition of Very Likely Voters seem to favor Republicans.

Warning: Weekend samples are often more Republican than weekday samples, which may explain the “trend.” Elections are held on Tuesdays.

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

	October 28- November 3				
	All Likely Voters November 1-3 (N=496)	All Likely Voters October 28-31 (N=505)		Very Likely Voters November 1-3 (N=315)	Very Likely Voters October 28-31 (N=328)
Republicans	47%	45%		51%	44%
Democrats	44%	45%		44%	46%
Neither	6%	8%		3%	8%
Don't know	3%	2%		2%	2%

Red and Blue America: The Do-It-Yourself Election

In conjunction with both the Cook Political Report and *National Journal* magazine, Ipsos-Reid has been tracking opinions of voters by how their county voted in the excruciatingly close 2000 Presidential election. Weak Bush and Gore counties are the swing geographies of the U.S.—those counties where Bush (or Gore) won with less than 55% of the major party vote.

Nothing better demonstrates how voters have found their own way home than the final results of this analysis, based on surveys conducted with 2,293 registered voters from October 25 through November 3.

Over the course of the year, weak Bush counties have sometimes wandered away from Republicans and weak Gore counties have moved toward the Republicans from time to time, but as Election Day approaches, voters have returned to their 2000 vote patterns. Republican control of Congress is preferred in Weak Bush counties, 47%-40%, and Democratic control preferred in Weak Gore counties, 47%-40%.

In the end, voters figured it out for themselves, without the impetus of strong messages from either party.

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	County Vote in 2000					
	Strong Bush	Weak Bush	Weak Gore	Strong Gore	Bush counties	Gore counties
Republicans	49%	47%	40%	32%	49%	35%
Democrats	37%	40%	47%	58%	38%	54%
Neither	10%	7%	9%	6%	9%	7%
(DK/NS)	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%

For more information on this release, please contact:

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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 usually 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.