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The Gender Gap, Other Gaps, and the Undecided Voters

Cook Political Report/Ipsos-Reid Survey Shows Bush Reelect Margin is +14 Overall (43% Definitely Vote to Reelect Bush Minus 29% Definitely for Someone Else);

Gender Gap is 14 Percentage Points (Bush Margin +22 with Men, +8 with Women); Age, Region, and Marriage Gaps Wider Than Gender Gap at Outset of 2003

Between December 3-5 and December 17-19, 2002, Ipsos-Reid US Public Affairs interviewed for Cook Political Report a representative sample of 2,011 adults nationwide, including 1,553 registered voters. The margin of error for the combined surveys is $\pm 2.2\%$ for all adults, $\pm 2.5\%$ for registered voters.

WASHINGTON, D.C., (January 6, 2002) — As President George W. Bush begins the second half of his term in office, he enjoys high approval ratings and a sharply divided electorate—the political situation that led to a narrow but historically decisive Republican victory in the November 2002 midterm elections.

Looking ahead to 2004, 43% of registered voters would definitely vote to reelect Bush, 29% would definitely vote for someone else, and 25% are swing voters who would consider voting for someone else (and 3% are not sure). That translates into a 14-point margin for Bush, as Bush breaks even in counties that voted for Gore, and wins by 25 percentage points in counties that voted for Bush in 2000, for a 25-point Red Counties vs. Blue Counties gap.

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

	Total	Bush counties	Gore counties
Definitely vote to reelect George W. Bush for President	43%	49%	36%
Consider voting for someone else (<i>Swing voters</i>)	25%	25%	24%
Definitely vote for someone else for President	29%	24%	36%
(DK/NS)	3%	2%	4%
Margin: Definitely reelect minus definitely someone else	+14	+25	+/- 0

Gender Gap is 14 Points, Marriage and Region Gaps Loom Larger

There is a 14-point gender gap, as Bush enjoys a 22-point margin among men (47% would definitely vote to reelect Bush, only 25% would definitely vote for someone else) but only an 8-point margin among women (40% definitely reelect, 32% definitely someone else). That gender gap persists across social classes (it is a 15-point gender gap between non-college-educated men and women, and a 14-point gender gap between college-educated men and women), and, generally speaking, across age breaks (it is a 18-point gender gap between men and women age 18-44, and an 11-point gender gap between men and women age 45 and older).

As broad as the 14-point gender gap is the 12-point gap between the pro-Bush margins in the Northeast and West regions (a +7 margin for Bush's reelection) versus the South and Midwest (+19).

The regional gap is twice as large, exceeding 30 points, between smaller geographic regions, such as the gaps between New England (+/-0) and the Pacific Coast (-4) on the one hand versus the Rocky Mountain States (+31) and the West South Central States (+36) on the other. Those regional gaps are also reflected in the nationwide 25-point gap already noted between voters in the "Red Counties" Bush won and the "Blue Counties" Gore won in 2000.

There is a 17-point gap between urbanites (+2) and those living in suburban or rural areas (+19).

Stronger divisions appear: a 27-point gap between married (+25) and unmarried people (-2), especially the 48-point gap between married parents (+32) and single mothers (-16)—gaps that cannot be explained by income and economics alone.

By age, Bush does best among Baby Boomers (+20) and Generation X'ers (+23), and Bush does worst among the oldest voters, the Depression Era Babies (+8), and the youngest voters, the Generation Next voters (-3).

Undecided Voters: Neither Definitely for Bush nor Definitely for Someone Else

The key group going forward are undecided voters, who would consider voting for someone other than Bush but have not yet definitely made up their mind to do so. Nationwide, they represent 25% of all registered voters, and are equally likely to be men or women.

Two characteristics chiefly define undecided voters at this stage: Independents (36%), and Generation X'ers age 28 to 37 (34%).

Perhaps surprisingly, a third characteristic of undecided voters is that they are active investors who make 5 or more changes in their portfolio each year. (36% of active investors are undecided on how they will vote for President in 2004, mirroring the fact that they appear somewhat unable to decide on what stocks to keep in their portfolios!)

At this stage, Bush's margin is +70 among Republicans, -39 among Democrats and +15 among Independents. That means Independents are almost equidistant between Democratic and Republican registered voters, with a 55-point gap between Republicans and Independents and a 54-point gap between Democrats and Independents when it comes to Bush's reelection.

The electorate is defined sharply on partisan lines, with nonpartisans balanced evenly in the middle and often undecided about what they will do.

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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.