



Contact: Thomas Riehle 202-463-7300  
Public Release Date: December 6, 2003 – 9:00 a.m. (EST)

[thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com](mailto:thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com)

## News on Economy, Medicare Bill Passage and Bush Visit with Iraq Troops Stabilize Bush Re-election Support

*The Associated Press Poll was conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs between December 1-3, 2003, with 1,001 adults nationwide (margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ ). Political questions were asked only of registered voters (765 adults and a margin of error of  $\pm 3.6\%$ ).*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, (December 6, 2003) —Since the last national Ipsos poll, conducted the week before Thanksgiving, there have been three big news stories that have had the net effect of stabilizing definite support for the re-election of President Bush, according to a poll for The Associated Press conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. In this inaugural AP/Ipsos Poll there are also signs that Democratic opposition is coalescing against Bush and, especially, the direction Bush is leading the country.

### The Economy

The economy is an unmixed good news story that helps Bush. Fewer have negative feelings about the current local economy than at any time since the shadow of 9/11, according to the AP/Ipsos Poll.

8. *Rate the current state of the economy in your local area using a scale from 1 to 7, where 7 means a very strong economy today and 1 means a very weak economy.*

		ALL ADULTS						
		12/1 - 3/03	11/18 - 20/03	11/4 - 6/03	10/21 - 23/03	10/7 - 9/03	9/16 - 18/03	9/2 - 4/03
Total Strong (6-7).....		15	13	14	13	13	12	11
Total Weak (1-3).....		28	34	33	34	35	37	37
		8/19 - 21/03	8/5 - 8/03	7/22 - 24/03	7/8 - 10/03	6/17 - 19/03	6/3 - 5/03	
Total Strong (6-7).....		14	11	12	13	13	13	
Total Weak (1-3).....		34	35	38	33	38	32	
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 03	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 03	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter OND 02	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter JAS 02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
Total Strong (6-7).....		13	12	14	16	16	17	10
Total Weak (1-3).....		33	35	32	29	26	27	32

People in the AP/Ipsos Poll are as optimistic about the direction of the local economy as they have been in two years.

9. *Looking ahead six months from now, do you expect the economy in your local area to be much stronger, somewhat stronger, about the same, somewhat weaker, or much weaker than it is now?*

ALL ADULTS							
	12/1 - 3/03	11/18 - 20/03	11/4 - 6/03	10/21 - 23/03	10/7 - 9/03	9/16 - 18/03	9/2 - 4/03
Total Stronger .....	41	35	38	33	32	32	32
Total Weaker .....	11	12	13	12	17	15	15
		8/19 - 21/03	8/5 - 8/03	7/22 - 24/03	7/8 - 10/03	6/17 - 19/03	6/3 - 5/03
Total Stronger .....		30	36	34	31	34	34
Total Weaker .....		16	14	15	14	14	14
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 03	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 03	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter OND 02	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter JAS 02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
Total Stronger .....	35	29	30	30	37	41	31
Total Weaker .....	15	20	17	14	11	11	18

Respondents also feel a little better than they did a year ago about their progress in being able to make major purchases and other purchases—good news for retailers as the holiday shopping season opens.

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

ALL ADULTS		
	12/1 - 3/03	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
More comfortable .....	37	32
Less comfortable.....	40	42
No change (VOL).....	22	24
Not sure.....	1	2

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

ALL ADULTS		
	12/1 - 3/03	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
More comfortable .....	44	38
Less comfortable.....	36	37
No change (VOL).....	20	24
Not sure.....	-	1

In the AP/Ipsos poll, respondents prove especially confident about job security and the ability to save and invest in the future—two key indicators of deep-seated financial security that have proven historically to be the foundation of consumer confidence that leads to economic growth.

**14. 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?**

ALL ADULTS							
	12/1 - 3/03	11/18 - 20/03	11/4 - 6/03	10/21 - 23/03	10/7 - 9/03	9/16 - 18/03	9/2 - 4/03
More confident .....	44	39	41	39	35	42	40
Less confident.....	37	44	40	44	45	43	45
No change (VOL).....	17	16	16	16	18	14	13
Not sure .....	2	1	3	1	2	1	2
		8/19 - 21/03	8/5 - 8/03	7/22 - 24/03	7/8 - 10/03	6/17 - 19/03	6/3 - 5/03
		36	38	39	36	39	37
		46	45	46	45	46	45
		16	16	13	16	14	16
		2	1	2	3	1	2
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 03	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 03	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter OND 02	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter JAS 02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
	38	34	37	39	42	39	36
	44	46	46	45	41	45	41
	16	17	15	14	15	15	19
	2	3	2	2	2	2	4

**15. 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?**

ALL ADULTS							
	12/1 - 3/03	11/18 - 20/03	11/4 - 6/03	10/21 - 23/03	10/7 - 9/03	9/16 - 18/03	9/2 - 4/03
More confident .....	46	42	43	45	36	44	41
Less confident.....	36	41	39	38	44	42	42
No change (VOL).....	16	16	15	15	18	13	15
Not sure .....	2	1	3	2	2	1	2
		8/19 - 21/03	8/5 - 8/03	7/22 - 24/03	7/8 - 10/03	6/17 - 19/03	6/3 - 5/03
		39	41	42	39	44	40
		44	41	42	43	42	42
		15	16	13	15	12	15
		2	2	3	3	2	3
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 03	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 03	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter OND 02	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter JAS 02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
	41	35	35	37	44	42	37
	42	45	49	49	39	40	43
	15	17	14	12	15	16	17
	2	3	2	2	2	2	3

### **The Bush Thanksgiving Visit to Troops in Iraq**

The situation in Iraq--with Bush's telegenic Thanksgiving visit to the troops balanced against a month with more American casualties than any month this year (including the months last Spring of major military actions)--gets mixed reviews. Young people in particular are less likely than others to approve of Bush's handling of foreign policy and the war on terrorism, and that spills over into low approval ratings overall and on his handling of the economy from 18-to-29-year old voters.

#### **3. SUMMARY: TOTAL APPROVE : REGISTERED VOTERS**

	Total	Age				
		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Handling foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism	54%	47%	63%	55%	53%	53%
Overall job as president	53%	46%	58%	58%	52%	49%
Handling the economy	50%	40%	57%	59%	48%	45%
Handling domestic issues like health care, education, the environment and energy	47%	50%	51%	50%	42%	44%

### **Legislative Victory on Medicare Bill**

The legislative situation--passage of the Medicare Bill--is giving Bush much less of a bump. In fact, older voters age 50+ are less likely than younger voters under age 30 to approve of Bush's handling of non-economic domestic responsibilities like health care and other issues, even though older voters are in every other measure more positive toward Bush than the youngest voters.

## Bush Re-Election Standing

Overall, Bush has solidified his position, recovering from slippage on his reelection score from what it was a year ago, back when voters were 15 points more likely to say they'd definitely vote for Bush (44%) rather than definitely not support Bush (29%). Through the summer, that number fell from a double-digit Bush advantage in early June to a lead in the 5-point to 12-point range through the rest of the summer, then a range of 0 to 7 points throughout the fall. It is at the higher end of that range (+5 points, 41% definitely re-elect to 36% definitely vote for someone else) today.

### 5. *If the election were held today, would you ...*

	REGISTERED VOTERS						
	12/1 - 3/03	11/18 - 20/03	11/4 - 6/03	10/21 - 23/03	10/7 - 9/03	9/16 - 18/03	9/2 - 4/03
Definitely vote to reelect Bush as President.....	<b>41</b>	37	39	40	36	41	38
Consider voting for someone else .....	<b>20</b>	25	24	24	26	22	24
Definitely vote for someone else .....	<b>36</b>	37	35	33	35	35	36
Not sure .....	<b>3</b>	1	2	3	3	2	2
		8/19 - 21/03	8/5 - 8/03	7/22 - 24/03	7/8 - 10/03	6/17 - 19/03	6/3 - 5/03
		40	44	40	41	40	44
		25	21	23	26	26	22
		32	32	35	31	32	31
		3	3	2	2	2	3
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 03	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 03	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter OND 02	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter JAS 02	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter AMJ 02	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter JFM 02	1 Year Ago 12/3 - 5/02
	44	41	44	42	50	54	<b>44</b>
	23	23	25	29	25	24	<b>24</b>
	30	33	28	26	22	20	<b>29</b>
	3	3	3	3	3	2	<b>3</b>

The shape of Bush support looks like a lopsided Liberty Bell. He is extremely weak among the youngest voters, strong with voters in their 30s and 40s, weaker among older voters.

### 5. *If the election were held today, would you...?*

	Total	Age				
		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-64	65+
Definitely vote to reelect George W. Bush for President	41%	28%	43%	46%	42%	41%
Consider voting for someone else	20%	22%	27%	16%	20%	17%
Definitely vote for someone else for President	36%	48%	29%	35%	36%	38%
(DK/NS)	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	4%

Bush is strongest in the Midwest and West, especially the Great Plains and Mountain states, weakest in the Northeast and on the Pacific Coast--and quite weak in the South (although in the Oil Patch states of the South, Bush does well on his own re-elect, Republicans do not do well on Congressional party preference in the Oil Patch).

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

		Region (4)				Region (5)				
	Total	North-east	Mid-west	South	West	Great Lakes	Great Plains/Mountain	Deep South	Oil Patch	Pacific
Definitely vote to reelect George W. Bush for President	41%	35%	43%	40%	43%	42%	49%	36%	51%	38%
Consider voting for someone else	20%	23%	23%	19%	17%	25%	19%	21%	13%	17%
Definitely vote for someone else for President	36%	40%	31%	38%	37%	31%	28%	40%	33%	42%
(DK/NS)	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%

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

		Region (4)				Region (5)				
	Total	North-east	Mid-west	South	West	Great Lakes	Great Plains/Mountain	Deep South	Oil Patch	Pacific
Republicans	42%	36%	48%	38%	45%	47%	52%	37%	38%	40%
Democrats	44%	53%	38%	45%	43%	37%	36%	48%	36%	48%
Neither	10%	9%	12%	11%	7%	13%	8%	10%	16%	8%
(DK/NS)	4%	2%	2%	6%	5%	3%	4%	5%	10%	4%

There is a strong economic class pattern to responses, with the vote split among those in the middle-income ranges.

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

		Household Income			
	Total	Under \$25K	\$25K- <\$50K	\$50K- <\$75K	\$75K+
Definitely vote to reelect George W. Bush for President	41%	30%	42%	43%	50%
Consider voting for someone else	20%	19%	20%	22%	18%
Definitely vote for someone else for President	36%	47%	37%	31%	30%
(DK/NS)	3%	4%	1%	4%	2%

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

		Household Income			
	Total	Under \$25K	\$25K- <\$50K	\$50K- <\$75K	\$75K+
Republicans	42%	29%	41%	45%	49%
Democrats	44%	54%	42%	42%	40%
Neither	10%	11%	13%	10%	7%
(DK/NS)	4%	6%	4%	3%	4%

The only hint of bad news for Bush: Opposition is coalescing. Throughout 2002-2003, Republicans have been more monolithic in their support of Bush, Democrats not quite so unified in opposition. Now there are cracks in the monolith and unified opposition (on whether the country is headed in the right direction, Democratic women are far more negative than Republican women are positive, for example).

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

		Reg. Voters: Party Identification/Gender			
	Total	Republican men	Republican women	Democratic men	Democratic women
Right direction	41%	72%	65%	23%	14%
Wrong track	53%	24%	30%	71%	80%
(DK/NS)	6%	4%	5%	6%	6%

There has also been some rallying of Democrats behind their leaders. In the Democratic primary/caucus poll roll-up, several candidates tie or outpoint "Other/None/Not sure." In September and before that, "Other/None/Not sure" generally out-pointed every live candidate in the race.

**THE TABLES ON THIS PAGE REFLECT RESULTS AMONG RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED ON NOVEMBER 18-20 AND DECEMBER 1-3, 2003. THIS INCLUDES A TOTAL OF 1,049 NON-REPUBLICANS, WHO ARE THEN SCREENED DOWN TO 539 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS (MARGIN OF ERROR:  $\pm 4.3$ ).**

**(Q.6a ASKED ONLY OF NON-REPUBLICANS.)**

6a. Looking ahead, in the 2004 campaign to select the nominees for President, will you participate in the Democratic primary or caucus in your state to select the nominee for President, or in the Republican primary or caucus, or is that not an election you expect to participate in next year?

	NON-REPUBLICANS							
	<u>11/18- 12/3/03</u>	<u>11/4- 20/03</u>	<u>9/16- 18/03</u>	<u>9/2 - 4/03</u>	<u>7/8- 24/03</u>	<u>5/6- 22/03</u>	<u>4/15- 5/8/03</u>	
Participate in the Democratic primary or caucus.....	53	52	54	47	50	50	50	<b>CONTINUE</b>
Participate in the Republican primary or caucus.....	9	10	8	12	8	10	9	
Do not expect to participate in the primary election/ caucus next year.....	31	31	27	30	31	31	31	
Not sure .....	7	7	11	11	11	9	10	

**Q.6b-6e ASKED ONLY OF DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY OR CAUCUS PARTICIPANTS.**

6b. It is early, but if you had to choose today, which ONE of the following nine candidates would you be most likely to support for the Democratic nomination for President?

	DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS							
	<u>11/18- 12/3/03</u>	<u>11/4- 20/03</u>	<u>9/16- 18/03</u>	<u>9/2 - 4/03</u>	<u>7/8- 24/03</u>	<u>5/6- 22/03</u>	<u>4/15- 5/8/03</u>	
Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean .....	18	20	15	14	12	7	7	
Retired 4 star general Wesley Clark.....	14	16	13	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Former House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt .....	14	14	9	15	14	14	12	
Massachusetts Senator John Kerry .....	13	10	12	20	16	15	17	
Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman .....	10	12	9	13	16	18	15	
North Carolina Senator John Edwards.....	6	5	9	5	7	9	8	
New York activist Al Sharpton .....	4	3	7	4	3	5	5	
Former Illinois Senator Carol Mosely-Braun.....	4	3	1	3	4	3	4	
Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich <sup>1</sup> .....	2	4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Florida Senator Bob Graham .....	NA	NA	4	3	4	8	8	
New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (NOT ASKED; VOLUNTEERED) .....	-	1	-	2	1	3	2	
Other/none/not sure .....	15	12	21	23	18	22	22	

<sup>1</sup>Prior to November 4-6, 2003, respondents who selected Dennis Kucinich were coded as "other".



**For more information on this release, please contact:**

**Thomas Riehle**  
**President**  
**Ipsos-Public Affairs**  
**202.463.7300**  
[thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com](mailto:thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com)

**About Ipsos-Public Affairs**

*Ipsos-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 August 2001 in Washington, D.C., and is headed by veteran pollster Thomas Riehle, who has more than 15 years of experience as a political pollster in Washington. The division conducts strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of U.S. and international organizations. Typically, the division's studies are based on opinion research, not only public opinion, but often elite stakeholder, corporate and media opinion. Ipsos-Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, the second largest survey-based marketing research company in the world. The AP/Ipsos poll and the Ipsos Consumer Attitudes and Spending by Household (CASH) Index poll are conducted the first week of every month, as part of the Ipsos-Public Affairs weekly omnibus polling service.*