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Lukewarm Support for Space Option

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between January 9-11, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,000 adults nationwide, including 774 registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 for all adults, +/- 3.6 for registered voters.

(WASHINGTON, DC) Americans have mixed feelings about the proposal to expand the space program by building a permanent space station on the Moon with plans to eventually send astronauts to Mars. Overall, 48% favor and 48% oppose such a proposal.

As you may have heard, the **United States** is considering expanding the space program by building a permanent space station on the Moon with a plan to eventually send astronauts to Mars. Considering all the potential costs and benefits, do you favor expanding the space program this way or do you oppose it?

Favor	48
Oppose.....	48
Not sure.....	4

Generally speaking, young men, especially those with at least some college experience, favor the expansion of the US space program.

	Total	Male	Female	Men 18-44	Men 45+	Women 18-44	Women 45+
Favor	48%	57%	40%	64%	50%	52%	31%
Oppose	48%	41%	54%	35%	48%	43%	62%
(DK/NS)	4%	2%	6%	1%	2%	5%	7%

Politics and Space

When forced to choose between government spending priorities, the new space proposal becomes more of a political hot potato, with support dropping to only 42% and opposition rising to 55%.

On the whole, do you think our investment in space research is worthwhile or do you think it would be better spent on domestic programs such as health care and education?

Space research is worthwhile	42
Better to spend on domestic programs	55
Not sure	3

The opinions of older men and women are little changed when the focus is on the trade-off between space research and spending on domestic programs, but support among younger men and women under the age of 45 disappears when that trade-off is explicitly presented.

	Total	Male	Female	Men 18-44	Men 45+	Women 18-44	Women 45+
Space research is worthwhile	42%	50%	35%	48%	52%	33%	36%
Better to spend on domestic programs	55%	48%	61%	51%	45%	63%	60%
(DK/NS)	3%	2%	4%	1%	3%	4%	4%

As you may have heard, the **Bush administration** is considering expanding the space program by building a permanent space station on the Moon with a plan to eventually send astronauts to Mars. Considering all the potential costs and benefits, do you favor expanding the space program this way or do you oppose it?

Favor	43
Oppose.....	52
Not sure.....	5

Support for Space Exploration, but Not Necessarily Manned Space Exploration

In general, almost three-in-four Americans support sending humans into space and think it is important that the U.S. is the leading country in the world in space exploration. Given the specific choice on moon and Mars exploration between manned missions and more affordable missions using robots, however, a majority (57%) favors robot missions.

In light of the space shuttle accident last February, in which seven astronauts were killed, do you think the United States should or should not continue to send humans into space?

Should	73
Should not	24
Not sure.....	3

How important do you think it is for the United States to be the leading country in the world in the exploration of space? Do you think that is ...

Very important	29
Somewhat important.....	44
Not very important	15
Not important at all	12
Not sure.....	-
Total Important	72
Total Not Important	27

Some have suggested that space exploration on the moon and Mars would be more affordable using robots than sending humans to do the exploration. Would you rather see exploration of the moon and Mars done by robots or with human astronauts?

Robots	57
Humans.....	38
Not sure.....	5

To view all the questions and results on the poll, please download the topline document.

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