



## Newsweek/Ipsos GENEXT Poll: Bad Marks For Bush

**Newsweek.com** — In the latest Newsweek/Ipsos GENEXT poll, young voters express dissatisfaction with the president, the economy and the war in Iraq.

*For the NEWSWEEK/IPSOS GENEXT Poll, Ipsos-Public Affairs interviewed 351 registered voters age 18 to 29, from May 3 to May 20. The margin of error is plus or minus 5.2 percentage points. References to poll data on registered voters of all ages are from an AP/Ipsos poll conducted May 3-5 on 778 registered voters. That margin of error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.*

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**By Jonathan Darman**  
**Newsweek.com**

**May 24, 2004** —Young voters continue to turn a cold shoulder on President George W. Bush and his policies, according to the latest NEWSWEEK/IPSOS GENEXT poll. As the battle for the White House begins to heat up, voters aged 18-29 are giving the incumbent president poor marks on his handling of the economy, the war in Iraq and overall job performance.

In the Newsweek/Ipsos GENEXT poll, only 47 percent of young voters approve of Bush's performance in office, echoing the 48 percent of all registered voters who approved of the president in an AP-Ipsos poll conducted at the same time as the GENEXT poll. A mere 40 percent of 18-29 year olds think that America is headed in the right direction, while 58 percent of young voters think the country is on the wrong track. For voters of all ages, the right direction/wrong track spread—a key indicator of voter sentiment in an election year—was 38 percent to 58 percent.

Yet despite the dismal ratings young voters were willing to give the president, the Under-30s seemed unwilling to embrace Sen. John Kerry, the presumptive Democratic nominee for the presidency. Only 44 percent of young voters said they would vote for Kerry for president in a hypothetical election, compared to 42 percent who said they would vote for Bush. As in previous Newsweek/Ipsos GENEXT polls, Kerry's lackluster performance against the incumbent could in part be explained by the so-called "Nader factor." Independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader draws 10 percent of the youth vote in the latest poll, down a point from a month earlier.

Still, young voters seem intent on giving Bush bad reviews on a host of issues. Their criticisms of the president's handling of the economy are blistering: 56 percent say they disapprove of the president's handling of economic issues; 42 percent say they approve. When asked how they felt about Bush's handling of domestic issues like health care, education, the environment and energy, 46 percent of 18-29 year olds said they approved and 52 percent disapproved.

Interestingly, young voters' sour assessment of the domestic situation doesn't translate into anxiety over their own future employment. In this graduation season, 78 percent of young voters said they were optimistic about their job prospects and only 20 percent said they were pessimistic.

Young voters gave Bush mixed ratings on foreign policy and national security issues. A majority, 55 percent, said they approved of the president's handling of foreign policy issues and the war on terror, while only 44 percent said they disapproved.

But young voters found the Bush administration to be less praiseworthy on America's greatest current foreign policy challenge, the war in Iraq. Only 44 percent of young voters approved of the president's prosecution of the war, while fully 55 percent said they disapproved.

Indeed, Iraq clearly weighs heavily on the minds of young voters, perhaps in part because they are concerned that ongoing conflict there could affect their own lives. In recent months, lawmakers—including Congressman Charlie Rangel (D-NY) and Senators Fritz Holling (D-SC) and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.)—have urged that a draft for military service be reintroduced in the United States. While a clear majority of 18-29 year olds, 63 percent, think it is unlikely that the draft will be reinstated, a sizeable proportion, 36 percent, think it is likely the draft will come back. When asked if they would serve if drafted into the military, 62 percent of young voters said they would serve while 36 percent said they would not.

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