



## **Bush getting little credit for 1 million jobs created below voters' radar**

**Washington, D.C. (AP)** — The U.S. economy has gained about 1.2 million jobs in the last six months, but most voters haven't gotten the word.

*The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between June 7-9, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,003 adults nationwide, including 788 registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 for all adults, +/- 3.5 for registered voters. Margin of error for subgroups may be higher.*

**Public Release Date: Posted on Monday June 14, 2004**

### **Contact:**

Thomas Riehle  
202-463-7300  
thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com

**By RON FOURNIER**  
**Associated Press Writer**

**Washington, D.C. (AP)** — The U.S. economy has gained about 1.2 million jobs in the last six months, but most voters haven't gotten the word.

They're too focused on the war in Iraq and other news — and too busy trying to make ends meet — to notice the upbeat economic development. Few voters seem to be giving President Bush credit for the new jobs or other signs of recovery.

"I don't think he's created anything," said Lonnie Steele, 57, an undecided voter from East Flat Rock, N.C. "I know a number of people who are educated people, and they are working two or three minimum-wage jobs just trying to put groceries on the table and keep their families alive."

An Associated Press survey of 788 registered voters conducted Monday through Wednesday shows that while they may be gaining confidence in the economy and Bush's performance, 57 percent said the nation has lost jobs in the last six months. The Labor Department has reported just the opposite — nearly 1.2 million jobs gained in half a year.

"The message hasn't gotten out," said Andy Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center. "It takes a while for national changes to get down to the people level."

The Nov. 2 election may hinge on whether the economy continues to improve and whether voters notice. The race is a dead heat, with Bush at 46 percent, Democrat John Kerry at 45 percent and independent candidate Ralph Nader at 6 percent, according to the AP poll conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs.

Kerry's advisers say they're not surprised that many voters don't know about the new jobs. "It's because the quality of jobs that have been created are inferior to the jobs that have been lost," said one, Tad Devine.

Retorted Bush spokeswoman Nicolle Devenish: "That's just not true. Two-thirds of the jobs that have been created are in sectors with higher-paying salaries than the national average." She pointed to Bureau of Labor Statistics figures showing the average salary for non-supervisory workers at \$15.64 an hour.

But the BLS also reports that a bulk of the new jobs — 978,000 — come from the private services sector, where the average hourly salary is \$15.24. Of the sector's professional and businesses services jobs created in May, nearly half are temporary help, the bureau said.

"The jobs are being created for college students at McDonald's," said Barbara Mulkey, a Democratic voter from rural Floyd County, Ky. She said jobs had been lost, then didn't budge on her opinion of Bush when told she was wrong.

Michelle Blundy initially said U.S. jobs had been lost and called herself a "probable" Bush voter. Informed about the jobs gain, the Grand Rapids, Mich., woman said she would vote for Bush and chalked up her original skepticism to Michigan's poor economy.

"They're going to say all the jobs in Michigan are going here or there, whereas there may be jobs created in Colorado that of course we don't know about because we're not there," she said.

But many voters were like Steele, unswayed by the positive jobs figures. Though he had read about the gains in his local paper, the retired contractor still feels bad about the economy and the country, partly because of Iraq.

"There was a time when I would be proud to tell people I'm an American," Steele said. "Right now, in Iraq or anywhere, I'd be scared to tell people I'm an American."

Even a staunch Bush backer such as James Floyd said he thought jobs were lost in the last six months. "Jobs are moving overseas," said the Conroe, Texas, trucking firm owner.

Bush is not the first president to suffer from a disconnect between job figures and voter perceptions. His father had poor ratings on the economy and lost re-election in 1992, though an economic recovery was under way.

Bush campaign aides said the positive job news has been overshadowed by other events from Martha Stewart's legal troubles to the Iraqi prison abuse scandal. Even Ronald Reagan's death.

"There's been a lot of news to compete with the economic news," Devenish said.

Less than half of registered voters approve of Bush's job performance, believe the nation is headed in the right direction and back his efforts on domestic affairs, the AP-Ipsos poll showed. Disapproval of his efforts in Iraq increased — to 55 percent from 51 percent last month.

About 47 percent of the respondents said they approve of the president's performance on the economy, a slight improvement from last month when 43 percent held that view.

Kerry will try to keep voters focused on the most dismal economic data while fueling their anxieties about interest rates, health care premiums, tuition bills and other costs of living.

Bush plans to continue using domestic travel to highlight workers who have taken higher-paying jobs and companies that are hiring. His latest television ad tries to turn the tables on Kerry.

"After recession, 9-11 and war, now our economy has been growing for 10 straight months," the ad says. "John Kerry's response? He's talking about the Great Depression. One thing's sure: Pessimism never created a job."

**Associated Press Writer Emily Fredrix contributed to this report.**

**For more information, please contact:**

Thomas Riehle  
President, Ipsos Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.  
202.463.7300  
thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com

**Ipsos Public Affairs**

Ipsos Public Affairs, headquartered in Washington D.C., is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research company made up of campaign and political polling veterans as well as seasoned research professionals. The company conducts strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research but often elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research. It has offices in New York City, Chicago, San Ramon (CA), and Washington, with affiliates around the world. Ipsos Public Affairs conducts national and international public opinion polling on behalf of The Associated Press, the world's oldest and largest news organization, and conducts the young voters poll for Newsweek.com. Ipsos Public Affairs is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group.

To learn more, visit [www.ipsos-pa.com](http://www.ipsos-pa.com).

**Ipsos**

Ipsos is a leading global survey-based market research company, owned and managed by research professionals. Ipsos helps interpret, simulate, and anticipate the needs and reactions of consumers, customers, and citizens around the world.

Member companies assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media. They measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos member companies offer expertise in advertising, customer loyalty, marketing, media, and public affairs research, as well as forecasting and modeling and consulting. Ipsos has a full line of custom, syndicated, omnibus, panel, and online research products and services, guided by industry experts and bolstered by advanced analytics and methodologies. The company was founded in 1975 and has been publicly traded since 1999. In 2003, Ipsos generated global revenues of \$644.2 million U.S.

Visit [www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com) to learn more about Ipsos offerings and capabilities.