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Interview dates: September 20-22, 2004
Interviews: 1,541 adults, 1,302 registered voters, 916 likely voters
Margin of error: ± 2.5 for all adults, ± 2.7 for registered voters, $+3.2$ for likely voters

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL
CONDUCTED BY IPSOS-PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

***Bush In Significant Lead Over Kerry:
Kerry Needs To Mobilize Women For A Chance To Pull Ahead***

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between September 20-22, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,541 adults nationwide, including 916 registered voters. The margin of error is ± 2.5 for all adults, ± 2.7 for registered voters, and ± 3.2 for likely voters. Margin of error for subgroups may be higher.

Washington, D.C., September 26, 2004 — With six weeks remaining to Election Day, President George W. Bush continues to lead Senator John Kerry among likely voters, and now by a significant margin (52%-45%). Bush's 7-point lead is two points greater than Bush's lead two weeks ago (+5).

Bush leads among men (57% Bush, 40% Kerry), and the candidates are essentially tied among women (47% Bush, 48% Kerry). Democrats will need to rely on a strong vote among women to overcome the traditional Republican strength with men. However, Kerry's strength with women is narrowly based: he wins 48% of all women's votes, including 57% of the vote of unmarried women, but 42% among married women who are likely voters.

Bush has expanded support among his base groups and there's not much more room for growth among this constituency. But at 52% support among likely voters, he does not need much more growth, he just needs to hold on to the vote from the base groups that he wins overwhelmingly. Bush now wins among:

- 76% of white evangelical Protestants,
- 68% of rural voters,
- 65% of the vote in Texas and surrounding "Oil States" region,
- 63% of white men,
- 61% of suburban men (while Kerry wins suburban women).

Likely voters - (54%) Respondents who say they have a great deal or quite a bit of interest in following news about the campaign AND one of the following:

- Voted in 2000 AND rating of 8-10, OR;
- Did not vote in 2000 because too young to vote AND rating of 8-10, OR;
- Did not vote in 2000 for reason other than too young AND rating of 10.

- Q. If the election for President and Vice President were held today and the candidates were George W. Bush for President and Dick Cheney for Vice President, the Republicans, and John Kerry for President and John Edwards for Vice President, the Democrats, and Ralph Nader for President and Peter Camejo for Vice President, the Independents, for whom would you vote? (IF UNDECIDED/ NONE/NOT SURE, ASK:) Do you lean more toward...?

	LIKELY VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS		
	9/20 - 22/04	9/7 - 9/04	8/3 - 5/04	7/6 - 7/04	6/7 - 9/04 ¹
Bush-Cheney, the Republicans.....	51	50	44	49	44
Undecided, lean Bush-Cheney	1	1	2	1	1
Kerry-Edwards, the Democrats	43	45	45	46	46
Undecided, lean Kerry-Edwards	1	1	2	-	1
Nader-Camejo, the Independents	1	1	3	2	6
Undecided, lean Nader-Camejo.....	1	-	1	-	-
(NOT READ) None/other candidate.....	1	1	2	1	1
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1
Total Would Vote/Lean Bush-Cheney	52	51	45	50	44
Total Would Vote/Lean Kerry-Edwards ..	45	46	48	46	47
Total Would Vote/Lean Nader-Camejo ...	1	1	3	2	6

Support for both candidates is very definite and few voters remain persuadable at all: more than eight in ten Bush and Kerry voters say their decision is definite. Just 22% of likely voters are at all persuadable—soft supporters of one of the two candidates or undecided on how they will cast their vote. That narrow group, one-in-five voters, hold the balance of the election in their hands, and they currently lean 47% Kerry to 38% Bush—a sign Kerry will close the gap, but not by enough to win the election.

(ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SELECT A CANDIDATE.)

- Q.. In November, will you definitely vote for those candidates, probably vote for those candidates, or do you think you could change your mind before the election in November?

	LIKELY VOTERS			
	Would Vote for Bush-Cheney		Would Vote for Kerry-Edwards	
	9/20 - 22/04	9/7 - 9/04	9/20 - 22/04	9/7 - 9/04
Definitely will vote for candidates	84	81	77	77
Probably will vote for candidates	12	14	17	17
Could change mind	4	5	6	6
Not sure	-	-	-	-

BUSH-CHENEY VS. KERRY-EDWARDS: HIERARCHICAL VOTE WITH "LEANERS"				
	LIKELY VOTERS		REGISTERED VOTERS	
	9/20 - 22/04	9/7 - 9/04	8/3 - 5/04	7/6 - 7/04
Strong Bush-Cheney	43	40	32	34
Weak Bush-Cheney	9	10	14	16
TOTAL BUSH-CHENEY	52	51	45	50
Strong Kerry-Edwards	33	35	31	27
Weak Kerry-Edwards	11	12	17	19
TOTAL KERRY-EDWARDS	45	46	48	46
Nader-Camejo	1	1	3	2
Undecided/other	3	2	3	2

Bush Approval Ratings Positive

Among likely voters, ratings of Bush's overall performance remain very narrowly in the positive range (54% approve, 46% disapprove). These numbers are a net +4 improvement for Bush over the past two weeks.

- Q. Overall, do you approve, disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:)** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	LIKELY VOTERS	
	9/20 - 22/04	9/7 - 9/04
Strongly approve	37	37
Somewhat approve	9	9
Lean toward approval.....	7	6
Still have mixed feelings.....	1	1
Lean toward disapproval	8	10
Somewhat disapprove.....	4	3
Strongly disapprove	34	34
Not sure	-	-
Total Approve	54	52
Total Disapprove	46	48
Mean Rating¹	4.2	4.1

Bush gets majority approval on foreign policy and the war on terrorism (55%-45%), which has been his strongest point throughout the campaign. Half (53%) approve of his handling of the economy (46% disapprove). Continued positive consumer sentiment (measured in AP/Ipsos CASH Index poll) allows Bush to enjoy generally improving scores on his handling of the economy. He gets divided marks on handling domestic issues (50%-49%) and Iraq (51%-48%).

- Q. And when it comes to **(READ ISSUE)** do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling that issue? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:)** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/ disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	Strongly Ap- prove	Some- what Ap- prove	Lean Toward Ap- proval	Still Have Mixed Feelings	Lean Toward Disap- proval	Some- what Disap- prove	Strongly Disap- prove	Not Sure	Total Ap- prove	Total Disap- prove	Mean- Rating ¹
LIKELY VOTERS											
Handling the economy											
9/20-22/04	33	13	6	1	8	7	32	-	53	46	4.2
9/7-9/04	31	13	7	1	7	6	35	-	51	48	4.0
Handling domestic issues like health care, education, the environment and energy											
9/20-22/04	25	15	10	1	8	7	34	-	50	49	3.9
9/7-9/04	24	15	10	1	6	7	37	-	48	50	3.8
Handling foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism											
9/20-22/04	43	9	3	-	8	5	32	-	55	45	4.4
9/7-9/04	45	6	4	-	7	6	31	1	54	45	4.4
Handling the situation in Iraq											
9/20-22/04	37	6	8	1	7	6	35	-	51	48	4.1

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