



## Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

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### National Poll

This Marist College Institute for Public Opinion poll reports:

#### *President Bush: Ratings and Re-election Prospects*

- **Job Performance.** 53% of registered voters nationwide approve of the job President Bush is doing in office. This represents a 17% decrease in President Bush's approval rating since April of this year.

**Question Wording:** Do you approve or disapprove of the job George Bush is doing as president?

Registered voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	53%	42%	5%
April 2003	70%	23%	7%
February 2003	56%	34%	10%
January 2003	57%	34%	9%
October 2002	65%	27%	8%
April 2002	74%	17%	9%
January 2002	81%	11%	8%
November 2001	85%	8%	7%
March 2001	50%	24%	26%
January 2001	50%	20%	30%

Democrats	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	27%	67%	6%
April 2003	47%	42%	11%
February 2003	31%	55%	14%
January 2003	28%	61%	11%
October 2002	41%	45%	14%
April 2002	55%	30%	15%
January 2002	71%	19%	10%

<b>Republicans</b>	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	84%	13%	3%
April 2003	97%	2%	1%
February 2003	89%	6%	5%
January 2003	90%	6%	4%
October 2002	89%	9%	2%
April 2002	97%	2%	1%
January 2002	96%	2%	2%

<b>Independents</b>	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	51%	43%	6%
April 2003	66%	27%	7%
February 2003	54%	37%	9%
January 2003	51%	36%	13%
October 2002	65%	26%	9%
April 2002	73%	19%	8%
January 2002	81%	9%	10%

- **Handling the Situation in Iraq.** The most dramatic shift has occurred in voters' perceptions of President Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq. 48% of registered voters approve of the job President Bush is doing there, a drop of 28% since last April.

**Question Wording:** Do you approve or disapprove of how President George Bush is handling the situation in Iraq?

<b>Registered Voters</b>	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	48%	47%	5%
April 2003	76%	20%	4%

- **Handling the Economy.** 50% of registered voters disapprove of President Bush's handling of the economy.

**Question Wording:** Do you approve or disapprove of how President George Bush is handling the economy?

<b>Registered Voters</b>	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	46%	50%	4%
April 2003	50%	44%	6%

- **Handling the War on Terrorism.** 59% of registered voters approve of President Bush's handling of the war on terrorism.

**Question Wording:** Do you approve or disapprove of how President George Bush is handling the war on terrorism?

Registered Voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
November 2003	59%	38%	3%
April 2003	78%	18%	4%

- **Minds Made Up?** 38% of registered voters definitely plan to vote to re-elect President Bush in 2004 and 44% definitely plan to vote against him. The remaining 18% are not committed either way.

**Question Wording:** Do you definitely plan to vote for George Bush for re-election as president in 2004 or do you definitely plan to vote against him?

Registered voters	For	Against	Depends	Unsure
November 2003	38%	44%	7%	11%
April 2003	40%	30%	14%	16%
February 2003	36%	34%	10%	20%
January 2003	37%	35%	12%	16%
October 2002	42%	29%	11%	18%
April 2002	41%	24%	15%	20%
January 2002	43%	21%	13%	23%

- **Potential Democratic Challengers.** Yet, when matched against the leading Democratic challengers, President Bush outpaces his rivals with margins that range from 5% to 19%. Latest entrant retired General Wesley Clark trails President Bush by the widest margin among these Democrats.

**Question Wording:** If the 2004 presidential election were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

	George Bush	Richard Gephardt	Unsure
Registered voters	48%	43%	9%

	George Bush	John Kerry	Unsure
Registered voters	48%	42%	10%

	George Bush	Howard Dean	Unsure
<b>Registered voters</b>	49%	41%	10%

	George Bush	Joe Lieberman	Unsure
<b>Registered voters</b>	52%	41%	7%

	George Bush	Wesley Clark	Unsure
<b>Registered voters</b>	55%	36%	9%

- **Direction of the Country.** Americans divide over how they think things in this country are going. 45% think the country is headed in the right direction and 48% think it is headed in the wrong direction.

**Question Wording:** In general, thinking about the way things are going in the country, do you feel things are going in the right direction or that things are going in the wrong direction?

<b>Americans</b>	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure
November 2003	45%	48%	7%
April 2003	55%	34%	11%
January 2003	42%	48%	10%
October 2002	45%	46%	9%
April 2002	60%	32%	8%
January 2002	60%	30%	10%
March 2001	41%	44%	15%
January 2001	56%	32%	12%

- **The Public's Priority.** Jobs and the economy weigh heavily on voter's minds.

**Question Wording:** Thinking about the future, are you more concerned about the war on terrorism or more concerned about jobs and the economy?

<b>Registered voters</b>	War on Terrorism	Jobs & Economy	Unsure
November 2003	34%	62%	4%
Democrats	23%	75%	2%
Republicans	48%	50%	2%
Independents	33%	62%	5%

### ***Democratic Field for 2004 Is Wide Open***

- **Up for Grabs.** 32% of Democratic voters nationwide are undecided about whom to support for their party's nomination for president in 2004. Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean has made the largest gains since last spring.

**Question Wording:** If the next Democratic presidential primary were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

Democrats	Nov 2003	April 2003	Feb 2003	Jan 2003	Oct 2002
Howard Dean	16%	3%	< 1%	1%	1%
Joseph Lieberman	12%	17%	18%	20%	21%
Richard Gephardt	10%	13%	8%	9%	18%
John Kerry	9%	10%	14%	14%	6%
Wesley Clark	8%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Al Sharpton	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%
John Edwards	4%	5%	4%	7%	3%
Carol Moseley Braun	3%	3%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Dennis Kucinich	1%	1%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Other	n.a.	5%	9%	11%	10%
Undecided	32%	39%	42%	35%	38%

- **Few Long-term Commitments.** Only 23% of Democrats who say they support a Democratic contender are strongly committed to that candidate.

**Question Wording:** Would you say that you strongly support (candidate), somewhat support (candidate), or do you think that you might vote differently on primary day?

Democrats	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Might Vote Differently	Unsure
November 2003	23%	33%	39%	5%

- **Issues.** The economy and domestic issues such as health care and education far outdistance other concerns on the minds of Democratic voters.

**Question Wording:** Which of the following issues are you most interested in hearing about during the campaign?

Democrats	Nov 2003	April 2003	Jan 2003
The economy	37%	40%	39%
Domestic issues like health care or education	37%	42%	37%
The situation in Iraq	11%	4%	9%
Homeland security	8%	7%	8%
The war against terrorism	5%	4%	5%
Unsure	2%	3%	2%

### ***Nature of the Sample: 1,004 Americans***

This survey was conducted on October 27<sup>th</sup> through 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003. 1,004 adults 18 years of age or older within the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. The results of the entire survey are statistically significant at  $\pm 3\%$ . There are 788 registered voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at  $\pm 3.5\%$ . There are 339 Democrats or Democratic leaning Independents in the sample. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at  $\pm 5.5\%$ . The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.