



**National Poll:
 The Candidates and the Campaign
 2004**

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This Marist College Institute for Public Opinion poll reports:

- **Close contest:** One week before the start of the Democratic Convention, John Kerry and George Bush are tightly matched nationwide among registered voters. Kerry has the support of 45% of the national electorate compared with 44% for Bush. Ralph Nader receives 2%, and 9% are undecided. In the 17 battleground states, Kerry receives the support of 47% of registered voters and Bush receives 42%.¹

Question Wording: If November's presidential election were held today, whom would you support if the candidates are:

Registered voters	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
July 2004	44%	45%	2%	9%
With leaners	46%	47%	3%	4%
Battleground states	42%	47%	2%	9%
April 2004 (Pres. Only)	47%	43%	5%	5%

Voting Groups July 2004	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
Likely voters	46%	47%	1%	6%
Democrats	10%	84%	1%	5%
Republicans	87%	8%	1%	4%
Independents	36%	42%	6%	16%

¹ The battleground states include 17 states. Nine of the battleground states were carried by less than seven points by Former Vice President Gore in 2000. The Gore states include Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. Eight of the battleground states were carried by less than seven points by President Bush in 2000. The Bush states include Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, and West Virginia. Gore's home state of Tennessee is not included.

Voting Groups July 2004	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
East	38%	50%	2%	10%
Central	43%	45%	2%	10%
South	50%	42%	3%	5%
West	42%	46%	1%	11%
Big city	37%	46%	6%	11%
Small city	43%	47%	1%	9%
Suburban	42%	50%	1%	7%
Small town	43%	45%	2%	10%
Rural	56%	37%	2%	5%
Liberal	16%	74%	3%	7%
Moderate	36%	53%	3%	8%
Conservative	69%	22%	1%	8%
Not college graduate	42%	46%	3%	9%
College graduate	48%	43%	2%	7%
Less than \$50,000	34%	54%	2%	10%
\$50,000 or more	52%	41%	1%	6%
Men	45%	48%	2%	5%
Women	43%	43%	2%	12%
Union	32%	57%	1%	10%
Veteran HH	45%	45%	2%	8%
Access to Internet	47%	44%	2%	7%
Gun owners	56%	36%	1%	7%
Att. religious serv. often	53%	38%	2%	7%
Does not attend often	35%	52%	3%	10%
Talk about election a lot	40%	54%	2%	4%
Don't talk about election	44%	40%	3%	13%
Money worries - always	26%	59%	4%	11%
No money worries	68%	26%	3%	3%
Saw Fahrenheit 911	9%	88%	0%	3%
Did not see movie	47%	42%	2%	9%
Plan to see movie	22%	66%	3%	9%
Do not plan to see movie	58%	32%	2%	8%

- **Intensity of support:** 69% of registered voters strongly support their choice for president and 22% say they somewhat support their candidate. Just 7% say they might vote differently on Election Day.

Question Wording: Would you say that you strongly support (candidate) somewhat support him, or do you think that you might vote differently on Election Day?

Registered voters	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Might Vote Differently	Unsure
July 2004	69%	22%	7%	2%
Bush supporters	73%	20%	5%	2%
Kerry supporters	67%	23%	8%	2%
April 2004	69%	22%	8%	1%

- **And the winner is...?** Neither Bush nor Kerry is seen as the likely winner by a majority of voters.

Question Wording: Regardless of whom you are planning to vote for, who do you think will win the election for president?

Registered voters	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Unsure
July 2004	45%	40%	1%	14%
Bush supporters	82%	8%	0%	10%
Kerry supporters	14%	74%	0%	12%
Undecided	29%	28%	4%	39%
April 2004 (Pres. Only)	52%	37%	n.a.	11%

- **Most voters think there's a lot at stake in this presidential election:** 90% of registered voters think it matters whether George Bush or John Kerry wins in November, with 75% saying it matters a great deal.

Question Wording: Do you think it matters a great deal, somewhat, not too much, or not at all whether George Bush or John Kerry wins the presidential election this year?

Registered voters	A Great Deal	Somewhat	Not Too Much	Not at all
July 2004	75%	15%	5%	5%
Bush supporters	80%	13%	5%	2%
Kerry supporters	76%	15%	5%	4%
Undecided	53%	23%	9%	15%
April 2004	66%	16%	9%	9%

- **Voters' impressions of the candidates:** Among the four major party candidates, Senator John Edwards is viewed most positively by voters.

Question Wording: Please tell me if you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of each of the following:

Registered Voters July 2004	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure/ Never Heard
George Bush	51%	47%	2%
Dick Cheney	46%	47%	7%
John Kerry	52%	43%	5%
John Edwards	56%	31%	13%

- **Voters divide over the job George Bush is doing as president:** 49% of registered voters nationwide approve of the job President Bush is doing in office, and 48% disapprove.

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

Registered voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
July 2004	49%	48%	3%
April 2004	51%	47%	2%
March 2004	52%	45%	3%
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%

- **Handling the situation in Iraq:** A majority of registered voters, 55%, disapprove of President Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq.

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

Registered Voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
July 2004	42%	55%	3%
April 2004	47%	51%	2%
March 2004	52%	45%	3%
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?

Registered Voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
July 2004	47%	50%	3%
April 2004	47%	51%	2%
March 2004	40%	57%	3%
November 2003	46%	50%	4%
April 2003	50%	44%	6%

- **Handling the war on terrorism:** A majority of registered voters, 53%, 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
July 2004	53%	43%	4%
April 2004	55%	42%	3%
March 2004	61%	36%	3%
November 2003	59%	38%	3%
April 2003	78%	18%	4%

- **The Cheney watch:** A majority of registered voters, 58%, think President Bush should keep Vice President Cheney as his running mate.

Question Wording: Do you think George Bush should keep Dick Cheney as his vice-presidential running mate in the presidential election, or do you think he should choose someone else?

Registered Voters	Keep Cheney	Choose Someone Else	Unsure
July 2004	58%	29%	13%
Democrats	45%	32%	23%
Republicans	79%	18%	3%
Independents	51%	35%	14%

- Secretary of State Colin Powell is the preferred choice of voters for vice president if Dick Cheney does not run again.

Question Wording: If Vice President Dick Cheney is not on the Republican ticket in November, which Republican would you like to see as President George Bush's running mate?

July 2004	Registered Voters	Republicans
Secretary of State Colin Powell	36%	38%
Arizona Senator John McCain	21%	20%
Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani	14%	14%
National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice	9%	13%
Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge	4%	5%
Tennessee Senator Bill Frist	3%	3%
Unsure	13%	7%

- **Team Kerry:** Most voters see John Edwards as a good choice to be John Kerry's running mate.

Question Wording: Is John Kerry's choice of Senator John Edwards as his running mate for vice president a good choice, or not?

Registered voters	Good Choice	Not a Good Choice	Unsure
July 2004	74%	18%	8%
Democrats	86%	9%	5%
Republicans	59%	31%	10%
Independents	78%	13%	9%

- **Voters are paying attention:** 76% of voters say they are following the Bush-Kerry match-up. 24% are not paying much attention to the campaign.

Question Wording: Would you say that you are following the presidential campaign very closely, closely, not very closely, or not at all?

Registered voters	Very Closely	Closely	Not Very Closely	Not Closely at All
July 2004	28%	48%	22%	2%
Bush supporters	29%	51%	19%	1%
Kerry supporters	32%	48%	18%	2%
Undecided	8%	46%	41%	5%
April 2004	20%	47%	26%	7%

- **What voters want to hear:** Domestic issues such as health care and education are what many voters want to hear about in the presidential campaign. Jobs and the economy are next, followed by the war on terrorism, homeland security, and the situation in Iraq.

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

Registered voters	Domestic Issues	Jobs & Economy	War on Terrorism	Homeland Security	Situation in Iraq	Unsure
July 2004	34%	26%	17%	11%	8%	4%
Bush supporters	26%	23%	27%	13%	8%	3%
Kerry supporters	42%	28%	9%	8%	9%	4%
Undecided	32%	29%	13%	9%	7%	10%
April 2004	33%	27%	15%	14%	8%	3%

- Voters who cite either domestic issues or the economy as their number one concern prefer John Kerry. George Bush is the choice among voters who are most concerned about the war on terrorism or homeland security. The candidates are closely matched among voters who are most concerned about the war in Iraq.

Registered voters	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
July 2004				
Domestic issues	33%	56%	3%	8%
Jobs & economy	39%	49%	3%	9%
War on terrorism	69%	23%	1%	7%
Homeland security	55%	36%	2%	7%
Situation in Iraq	44%	49%	0%	7%

- **Direction of the country:** 38% of voters think the country is headed in the right direction and 52% 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?

July 2004	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure
Registered voters	38%	52%	10%
Americans	37%	52%	11%
Previous Polls: Americans			
April 2004	43%	51%	6%
March 2004	43%	52%	5%
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%

- **Same-sex marriage:** Most voters do not think same-sex marriage should be a focus of the presidential campaign.

Question Wording: Do you think that the issue of same-sex marriage should be a focus during the presidential campaign?

Registered voters	Should Be Focus	Should Not Be Focus	Unsure
July 2004	28%	69%	3%
Bush supporters	40%	59%	1%
Kerry supporters	17%	81%	2%
Undecided	23%	69%	8%

Nature of the Sample: 1,222 Americans

This survey was conducted from July 12th through July 15th, 2004. 1,222 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 938 registered voters and 646 likely voters. The results for these sub-samples are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$ and $\pm 4\%$, respectively. The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.