



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

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This Marist College Institute for Public Opinion poll reports:

- **Convention bounce not even a blip:** John Kerry and George Bush are still neck and neck nationwide among registered voters. Kerry has the support of 45% of the national electorate compared with 44% for Bush. Ralph Nader receives 3%, and 8% are undecided. In the 17 battleground states, Kerry receives the support of 49% 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
August 2004	44%	45%	3%	8%
With leaners	46%	47%	3%	4%
Battleground states	42%	49%	2%	7%
July 2004	44%	45%	2%	9%
April 2004 (Pres. Only)	47%	43%	5%	5%

Likely voters	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
August 2004	47%	47%	1%	5%
July 2004	46%	47%	1%	6%

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 August 2004	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
Democrats	10%	85%	1%	4%
Republicans	87%	7%	1%	5%
Independents	42%	39%	5%	14%
East	36%	53%	2%	9%
Central	43%	45%	3%	9%
South	49%	40%	2%	9%
West	45%	47%	2%	6%
Big city	33%	57%	2%	8%
Small city	46%	45%	1%	8%
Suburban	47%	41%	4%	8%
Small town	47%	40%	3%	10%
Rural	53%	36%	1%	10%
Liberal	19%	69%	3%	9%
Moderate	42%	49%	2%	7%
Conservative	63%	25%	3%	9%
Not college graduate	44%	45%	2%	9%
College graduate	45%	46%	2%	7%
Less than \$50,000	40%	49%	3%	8%
\$50,000 or more	49%	41%	3%	7%
Men	51%	40%	3%	6%
Women	38%	50%	2%	10%
Union	41%	49%	3%	7%
Veteran HH	47%	41%	4%	8%
Access to Internet	47%	42%	2%	9%
Gun owners	56%	32%	3%	9%
Att. religious serv. often	49%	42%	3%	6%
Does not attend often	40%	48%	2%	10%
Watched DNC	33%	59%	2%	6%
Did not watch DNC	60%	25%	3%	12%
Money worries - always	25%	62%	2%	11%
No money worries	58%	30%	2%	10%

- **Most voters strongly support their choice:** 72% of registered voters strongly support their choice for president and 19% 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
August 2004	72%	19%	7%	2%
Bush supporters				
August 2004	78%	14%	7%	1%
July 2004	73%	20%	5%	2%
Kerry supporters				
August 2004	70%	22%	6%	2%
July 2004	67%	23%	8%	2%
July 2004	69%	22%	7%	2%
April 2004	69%	22%	8%	1%

- **What the convention really meant for John Kerry:** The biggest change in voters' perceptions of John Kerry as a result of the Democratic National Convention is that a growing number thinks he has a vision for the future, is respected by leaders throughout the world, and is ready to be president.

John Kerry...	Kerry's Post-convention Change	Registered Voters	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Has a vision for the future	+17	August 2004	63%	30%	7%
		July 2004	55%	39%	6%
Is respected by leaders throughout the world	+10	August 2004	44%	39%	17%
		July 2004	40%	45%	15%
Is ready to be president	+9	August 2004	53%	42%	5%
		July 2004	48%	46%	6%
Can beat Bush in November	+5	August 2004	55%	36%	9%
		July 2004	54%	40%	6%
Is a strong leader	+3	August 2004	52%	41%	7%
		July 2004	50%	42%	8%
Is honest and trustworthy	+1	August 2004	51%	40%	9%
		July 2004	50%	40%	10%
Can unify the country	+1	August 2004	41%	51%	8%
		July 2004	41%	52%	7%
Stands up for what he believes in	0	August 2004	59%	34%	7%
		July 2004	58%	33%	9%
Is closer to you on the issues	0	August 2004	47%	47%	6%
		July 2004	47%	47%	6%
Shares your values	-2	August 2004	49%	45%	6%
		July 2004	50%	44%	6%

- **And the winner is...?** Neither Bush nor Kerry is seen as the presumptive favorite for November by a majority of registered 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
August 2004	44%	43%	0%	13%
Bush supporters	80%	11%	0%	9%
Kerry supporters	13%	78%	0%	9%
Undecided	36%	23%	0%	41%
July 2004	45%	40%	1%	14%
April 2004 (Pres. Only)	52%	37%	n.a.	11%

- **Most voters think there's a lot at stake in this presidential election:** 88% of registered voters think it matters whether George Bush or John Kerry wins in November, with 73% 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
August 2004	73%	15%	6%	6%
Bush supporters	77%	14%	5%	4%
Kerry supporters	78%	14%	4%	4%
Undecided	44%	19%	24%	13%
July 2004	75%	15%	5%	5%
April 2004	66%	16%	9%	9%

- **Voters' impressions of the candidates:** Among the four major party candidates, John Edwards is still viewed most positively by voters. John Kerry has improved his standing since a similar survey conducted prior to the convention.

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

Registered Voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure/ Never Heard
George Bush			
August 2004	51%	47%	2%
July 2004	51%	47%	2%
Dick Cheney			
August 2004	43%	51%	6%
July 2004	46%	47%	7%

Registered Voters	Favorable	Unfavorable	Unsure/ Never Heard
John Kerry			
August 2004	56%	38%	6%
July 2004	52%	43%	5%
John Edwards			
August 2004	58%	31%	11%
July 2004	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 47% disapprove.

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

Registered voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
August 2004	49%	47%	4%
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
August 2004	41%	55%	4%
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:** 51% 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
August 2004	46%	51%	3%
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, 52%, 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
August 2004	52%	44%	4%
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%

- **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
August 2004	29%	47%	20%	4%
July 2004	28%	48%	22%	2%
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
August 2004	31%	25%	14%	14%	12%	4%
Bush supporters	22%	23%	22%	19%	11%	3%
Kerry supporters	38%	28%	7%	9%	15%	3%
Undecided	41%	27%	7%	11%	2%	12%
July 2004	34%	26%	17%	11%	8%	4%
April 2004	33%	27%	15%	14%	8%	3%

- Voters who cite domestic issues, the economy, or Iraq 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.

Registered voters August 2004	Bush/Cheney Republican	Kerry/Edwards Democrat	Nader/Camejo Independent	Undecided
Domestic issues	30%	55%	4%	11%
Jobs & economy	39%	50%	2%	9%
War on terrorism	70%	23%	3%	4%
Homeland security	63%	30%	0%	7%
Situation in Iraq	39%	58%	2%	1%

- **Direction of the country:** Although 48% of voters think the country is headed in the wrong direction and 41% think it is headed in the right direction, these results represent an improvement in voters' perceptions from the previous poll.

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?

Registered voters	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure
August 2004	41%	48%	11%
July 2004	38%	52%	10%
Americans			
August 2004	40%	48%	12%
July 2004	37%	52%	11%
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%

Nature of the Sample: 1,075 Americans

This survey was conducted from July 30th through August 2nd, 2004. 1,075 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 839 registered voters and 573 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.