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**National Poll:
President Bush...Take Two**

This Marist College Institute for Public Opinion poll reports:

- **Voters' approval of George Bush's performance as president nudges past fifty percent:**
One month into his second term, 51% of registered voters nationwide approve of the job President Bush is doing in office, and 45% disapprove.

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

Registered voters	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
February 2005	51%	45%	4%
November 1, 2004	49%	49%	2%
October 21, 2004	49%	48%	3%
October 7, 2004	49%	48%	3%
September 2004	49%	49%	2%
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%

- **President's handling of Iraq and the U.S. economy still a concern for a majority of voters:** 51% of registered voters 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
February 2005	46%	51%	3%
October 21, 2004	44%	53%	3%
October 7, 2004	44%	53%	3%
September 2004	43%	55%	2%
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%

- 52% 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
February 2005	45%	52%	3%
October 21, 2004	44%	53%	3%
October 7, 2004	43%	54%	3%
September 2004	42%	56%	2%
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%

- **But many voters give President Bush a thumbs up on his handling of the war on terrorism:** 57% 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
February 2005	57%	41%	2%
October 21, 2004	53%	43%	4%
October 7, 2004	52%	45%	3%
September 2004	52%	46%	2%
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%

- **Americans divide over whether the country is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction:** 48% of Americans think the country is headed in the wrong direction, and 47% think the country is headed in the right direction. However, this is an improvement in Americans' perceptions of the country from similar polls conducted during the campaign.

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?

Americans	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure
February 2005	47%	48%	5%
October 21, 2004	42%	55%	3%
October 7, 2004	39%	53%	8%
September 2004	38%	52%	10%
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%

- **Bring them home:** A majority of Americans think the U.S. should withdraw at least some troops from Iraq.

Question Wording: What do you think the United States should do about its number of troops in Iraq: send more, keep the same number, withdraw some, or withdraw all troops from Iraq?

Americans	Send More	Keep Same Number	Withdraw Some	Withdraw All Troops	Unsure
February 2005	12%	24%	23%	33%	8%

- **Second thoughts?** A majority of Americans think the war in Iraq is not worth it.

Question Wording: All in all, do you think the war in Iraq is worth it or not?

Americans	Worth It	Not worth It	Unsure
February 2005	43%	53%	4%

- **The Iraqi elections will make a difference:** Most Americans believe the elections in Iraq will make at least a small difference in the United States' involvement in the country.

Question Wording: Do you think the Iraqi elections will make a big difference, a small difference, or no difference in the United States' involvement in Iraq?

Americans	Big Difference	Small Difference	No Difference	Unsure
February 2005	37%	34%	25%	4%

- **A long road to democracy ahead:** Americans are not optimistic about the realization of a stable democracy in Iraq in the near future. Only about one in three Americans believe a stable democracy in Iraq will emerge in the next two years.

Question Wording: Two years from now, do you think it is very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all that Iraq will be a stable democracy?

Americans	Very Likely	Likely	Not Very Likely	Not Likely at All	Unsure
February 2005	6%	28%	39%	22%	5%

- **Americans see other imminent threats in the world:** Many Americans see North Korea as the biggest foreign threat facing the United States.

Question Wording: Which one of the following do you see as the biggest foreign threat facing the United States today?

Americans	February 2005	November 2004	May 2003
North Korea	43%	22%	38%
Al Qaeda	24%	43%	22%
Iraq	10%	11%	9%
Iran	8%	9%	n.a.
Middle East	5%	6%	8%
Syria	2%	1%	12%
Unsure	8%	8%	11%

- **Americans are hopeful for peace in the Middle East:** Many Americans are optimistic about the long-term chances for peace in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians.

Question Wording: Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the long term chances for peace in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians?

Americans	Optimistic	Pessimistic	Unsure
February 2005	50%	44%	6%

- **A majority of Americans are skeptical about President Bush's plan for social security:** 52% of Americans disapprove of the president's plan for social security.

Question Wording: Do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove of President Bush's plan for social security?

Americans	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Unsure
February 2005	7%	27%	29%	23%	14%

- **What to do about social security?** Most Americans do not think a major overhaul of the social security system is needed at this time. 40% of Americans believe some minor adjustments to the retirement program should be undertaken and 16% believe it is okay just the way it is. Younger Americans divide on this issue. 46% of Americans under 45 years of age believe a major overhaul is required, 40% think minor adjustments are needed, and 9% believe the system is okay as it is.

Question Wording: Do you think the social security system needs a major overhaul, needs minor adjustments, or is okay as it is?

Americans	Major Overhaul	Minor Adjustments	Okay as It Is	Unsure
February 2005	39%	40%	16%	5%
Younger than 45	46%	40%	9%	5%
45 or older	35%	41%	20%	4%

- **Who should take the lead on social security reform?** 41% of Americans believe the Democrats in Congress are best able to handle the task of reforming social security. 25% think the Republicans in Congress are and 16% think President Bush is.

Question Wording: Who do you think is best able to handle social security?

Americans	Democrats in Congress	Republicans in Congress	President Bush	Unsure
February 2005	41%	25%	16%	18%

- **Americans cautious about allowing private investments:** Overall, a majority of Americans say that allowing private investments for social security is a bad idea. But opinions differ depending on how close to retirement Americans are. 52% of Americans younger than 45 years of age think private investments would be a good idea compared with 32% of Americans 45 years of age or older who have this view.

Question Wording: Do you think allowing private investments for social security is a good idea or a bad idea?

Americans	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Unsure
February 2005	40%	52%	8%
Younger than 45	52%	40%	8%
45 or older	32%	60%	8%

Nature of the Sample: 1,009 Americans

This survey was conducted on February 14th through 16th, 2005. 1,009 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 851 registered voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The margin for error increases for cross-tabulations.