



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Thursday, June 12, 2003

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Andrew Kohut, Director
Carroll Doherty, Editor

66% EXPECT BUSH VICTORY, BUT DEMOCRATS MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN IN '91

Most Americans believe President Bush will win reelection next fall, but Democrats are holding out hope for their party's chances for success in 2004. Overall, two-thirds of registered voters (66%) think Bush will be reelected, compared with 22% who expect the Democratic candidate to prevail. In the fall of 1991, more than three-quarters of registered voters (78%) expected President George H.W. Bush to win the 1992 election.

Democrats are more optimistic about their chances now than they were in October 1991. Nearly half of registered Democrats (46%) think their party's candidate will win next year's election, while 38% expect Bush to prevail. In 1991, two-thirds of registered Democrats (67%) said they thought Bush would win the 1992 race. Independents also are less likely to say they expect a Bush victory (66% now, 82% then), while Republicans are about as confident as they were in October 1991 (91% now, 89% then).

The latest Pew Research Center nationwide poll of 1,000 Americans (including 749 registered voters), conducted June 4-8, finds that 62% of Americans approve of the president's job performance, down slightly from last month (65%). The president's job approval rating has declined from its recent peak of 74% in early April, shortly after the fall of Baghdad. Just prior to the war (March 13-16), 55% of the public approved of Bush's job performance.

Bush continues to win overwhelming support from Republicans (92%). But positive ratings for the president have slipped among independents and Democrats since the end of the Iraq war. Currently, 56% of independents approve of Bush's job performance, down from a recent peak of 73% in late March. Just four-in-ten Democrats give Bush a positive rating, down from 54% in early April.

	<i>Registered Voters</i>			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Ind</u>	<u>Dem</u>
<i>October, 1991</i>	%	%	%	%
George H.W. Bush	78	89	82	67
Democratic candidate	11	3	9	21
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	12
	100	100	100	100
<i>June, 2003</i>				
George W. Bush	66	91	66	38
Democratic candidate	22	4	22	46
Don't know	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	16
	100	100	100	100
<i>Difference</i>	-12	+2	-16	-29

Tax Cuts, Bush Trip Attract Little Attention

The public is showing little interest in the president's major accomplishments of the past month – his signing into law of \$350 billion in tax reductions, and his meetings with world leaders and efforts to jump-start the Mideast peace process. Only about one-in-five Americans say they followed those stories very closely (22% tax cut, 20% overseas trip).

Developments in Iraq continue as the top news story (46% very closely), although interest has declined since last month (63%). The infectious lung disease SARS also is attracting less interest: 28% say they followed reports on SARS very closely, compared with 39% in May.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for the *June News Interest Index* survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period June 4-8, 2003. Based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
2003 METHODOLOGY STUDY
FINAL TOPLINE
June 4 - 8, 2003
N=1000

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? [**IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH:** Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? **IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK**]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
June, 2003	62	27	11=100
May, 2003	65	27	8=100
April 10-16, 2003	72	22	6=100
April 9, 2003	74	20	6=100
April 2-7, 2003	69	25	6=100
March 28-April 1, 2003	71	23	6=100
March 25-27, 2003	70	24	6=100
March 20-24, 2003	67	26	7=100
March 13-16, 2003	55	34	11=100
February, 2003	54	36	10=100
January, 2003	58	32	10=100
December, 2002	61	28	11=100
Late October, 2002	59	29	12=100
Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100
Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100
Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100
Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100
August, 2002	67	21	12=100
Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100
July, 2002	67	21	12=100
June, 2002	70	20	10=100
April, 2002	69	18	13=100
Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
February, 2002	78	13	9=100
January, 2002	80	11	9=100
Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
August, 2001	50	32	18=100
July, 2001	51	32	17=100
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
March, 2001	55	25	20=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

Q.4 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely? **[READ AND ROTATE LIST]**

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
a. The \$350 billion federal tax cut recently signed into law	22	35	20	22	1=100
May, 2003 ¹	25	36	22	15	2=100
February, 2003	26	33	23	16	2=100
January, 2003	28	34	21	15	2=100
February, 2002	17	31	28	23	1=100
April, 2001	24	38	20	18	*=100
February, 2001	31	35	19	14	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	28	44	18	9	1=100
b. News about the current situation in Iraq	46	35	13	6	*=100
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*=100
April 11-16, 2003 ²	47	40	10	2	1=100
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
March 13-16, 2003 ³	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002	48	29	15	6	2=100
c. The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia	28	44	19	8	1=100
May, 2003	39	39	15	6	1=100
d. President Bush's summit meeting with world leaders and with the prime ministers of Israel and the Palestinian Authority	20	36	24	19	1=100
January, 2001 ⁴	21	32	29	17	1=100
July, 2000	15	30	24	31	*=100
November, 1998	18	33	28	19	2=100
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	21	40	27	12	*=100
September, 1995	11	32	29	27	1=100
Late September, 1993	23	33	24	19	1=100
Early September, 1993	19	31	23	26	1=100

¹ From January to May 2003 the story was listed as "George W. Bush's tax cut and economic stimulus plan." In February 2002 and April 2001 the story was listed as "The debate in Congress over George W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan." In February 2001 the story was listed as "George W. Bush's tax-cut plan." In February 1993 the story was listed as "Bill Clinton's economic plan." In September 1992 the story was listed as "George Bush's plan to improve the economy by cutting government spending and cutting taxes?" Results are based on registered voters.

² From March 20 to April 16, 2003 the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

³ From October 2002 to March 13-16, 2003 the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq." In Early September 2002 the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq."

⁴ In January 2001 and Early October 1998 the item was listed as "Renewed efforts at reaching a peace agreement in the Middle East." In July 2000 the item was listed as "The Middle East peace summit at Camp David." In November 1998 and September 1995 the item was listed as "The latest Mideast peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians." In Late September 1993 the item was listed as "The peace accords between Israel and the PLO." In Early September 1993, the item was listed as "Talks between Israel and the PLO about Arab self-rule for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho."

Q.5 Regardless of who you might support, who do you think is most likely to win the coming presidential election -- George W. Bush or a Democratic candidate?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=749]:

		March	Feb	Oct
		<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1991</u>
66	George W. Bush	72	66	78
22	Democratic candidate	20	25	11
<u>12</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.10 Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. Senate?

		June	Sept	June	May
		<u>2001</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>
63	Republican (<i>Correct Answer</i>)	12	10	17	17
10	Democratic	56	57	52	55
<u>27</u>	Don't Know/Refused	<u>32</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>28</u>
100		100	100	100	100

Q.11 I'd like your opinion of some groups and organizations. As I read from a list, please tell me which category best describes your overall opinion of what I name. (First,) would you say your overall opinion of (INSERT ITEM: ROTATE ITEMS WITH A OR B COMING FIRST AND THEN D THROUGH I FOLLOWING) is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? (INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE")

		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard Of	Can't Rate
a.	The Democratic Party	11	43	28	10	0	8=100
	April, 2003	13	44	25	11	*	7=100
	December, 2002	15	39	27	10	*	9=100
	July, 2001	18	40	24	10	*	8=100
	January, 2001	18	42	21	9	1	9=100
	September, 2000 (RVs)	16	44	23	12	*	5=100
	August, 1999	14	45	28	9	*	4=100
	February, 1999	11	47	26	11	0	5=100
	January, 1999	14	41	26	12	0	7=100
	Early December, 1998	18	41	24	10	0	7=100
	Early October, 1998 (RVs)	11	45	29	9	*	6=100
	Early September, 1998	13	47	25	8	*	7=100
	March, 1998	15	43	26	10	*	6=100
	August, 1997	11	41	32	10	0	6=100
	June, 1997	10	51	25	8	*	6=100
	January, 1997	13	47	28	7	*	5=100
	October, 1995	9	40	37	11	0	3=100
	December, 1994	13	37	31	13	*	6=100
	July, 1994	13	49	27	7	*	4=100
	May, 1993	14	43	25	9	0	9=100
	July, 1992	17	44	24	9	*	6=100
b.	The Republican Party	14	44	23	10	0	9=100
	April, 2003	14	49	21	10	*	6=100
	December, 2002	18	41	22	11	*	8=100
	July, 2001	11	37	27	15	*	10=100
	January, 2001	13	43	22	13	*	9=100
	September, 2000 (RVs)	11	42	28	12	0	7=100
	August, 1999	8	45	31	12	*	4=100
	February, 1999	7	37	36	15	0	5=100
	January, 1999	10	34	27	23	0	6=100
	Early December, 1998	11	35	27	20	*	7=100
	Early October, 1998 (RVs)	9	43	28	14	0	6=100
	Early September, 1998	9	47	26	11	*	7=100
	March, 1998	10	40	31	12	*	7=100
	August, 1997	9	38	36	11	*	6=100
	June, 1997	8	43	31	11	1	6=100
	January, 1997	8	44	33	10	*	5=100
	October, 1995	10	42	28	16	*	4=100
	December, 1994	21	46	19	8	*	6=100
	July, 1994	12	51	25	8	*	4=100
	May, 1993	12	42	25	10	0	11=100
	July, 1992	9	37	31	17	*	6=100

Q.33 Thinking about the Democratic and Republican parties, would you say there is a great deal of difference in what they stand for, a fair amount of difference, or hardly any difference at all?

		Feb <u>1999</u>	March <u>1998</u>	June <u>1997</u>	Oct <u>1995</u>	July <u>1994</u>	May <u>1990</u>	May <u>1987</u>
29	A great deal	33	28	25	34	23	24	25
49	A fair amount	46	45	48	46	51	45	45
20	Hardly any	18	23	25	18	24	27	25
<u>2</u>	DK/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ROTATE Q.34a AND Q.34b

Q.34a What does it mean to you when someone says they are a REPUBLICAN? (OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE.)

		Feb <u>1999</u>	May <u>1990</u>	Jan <u>1987</u>
15	Conservative/Right wing	18	22	21
15	That's their party/Who they vote for/Agree with on issues	11	--	8
12	They're rich/Support rich, powerful, monied interests	12	20	18
4	Business oriented/Support big business	6	10	13
4	Smaller government/Reduce government spending	4	6	5
3	Personal greed/Out for personal gain/Protect own assets	5	--	--
3	Religious/Family oriented	2	1	--
2	Want lower taxes	--	1	1
1	Not a Democrat	2	--	--
1	Pro-life	1	--	--
1	Morality	2	--	--
27	Other	16	14	24
27	No answer	33	45	28

Q.34b What does it mean to you when someone says they are a DEMOCRAT? (OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE.)

		Feb <u>1999</u>	May <u>1990</u>	Jan <u>1987</u>
16	That's their party/Who they vote for/Agree with on issues	12	--	9
15	Liberal/Left wing	16	18	18
10	For the people/For working people	15	18	21
7	For social programs/Social justice	9	9	7
4	Cares for poor, disadvantaged	3	7	7
2	Open-minded	2	--	--
2	Support bigger government	2	3	7
1	Middle class/For the middle class	2	--	--
1	Believes in higher taxes	1	1	2
1	Pro-choice	1	1	--
1	For minorities	*	2	--
25	Other	18	9	17
26	No answer	30	47	27