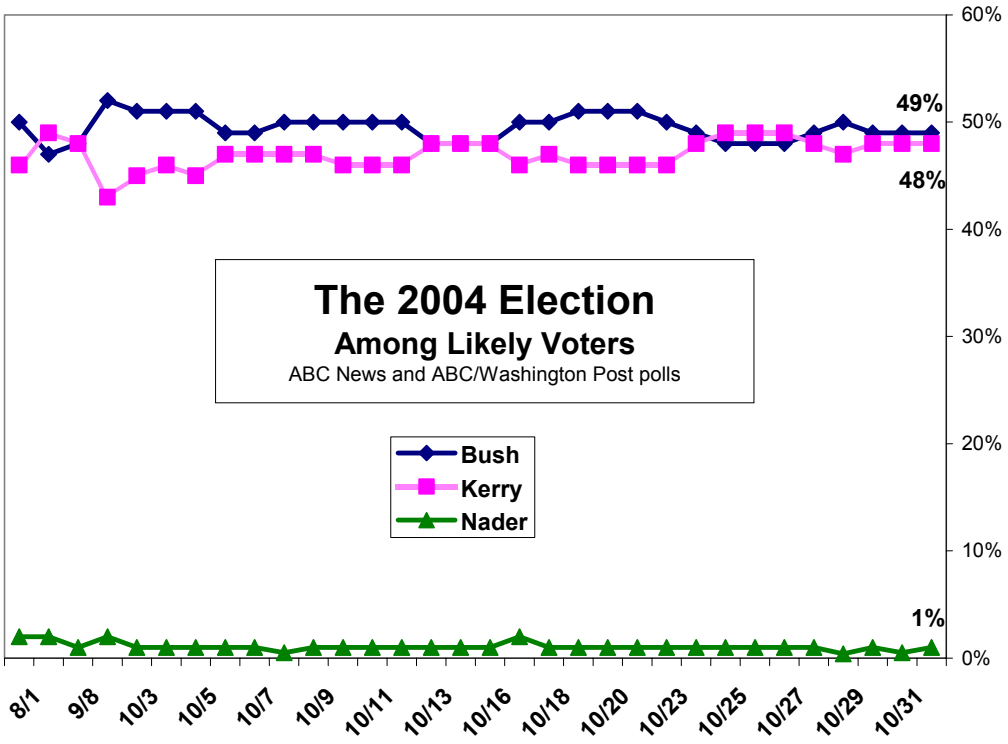
ABC NEWS POLL: CAMPAIGN TRACKING #26 – 10/31/04
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 1, 2004

Campaign '04 Closes With a One-Point Race

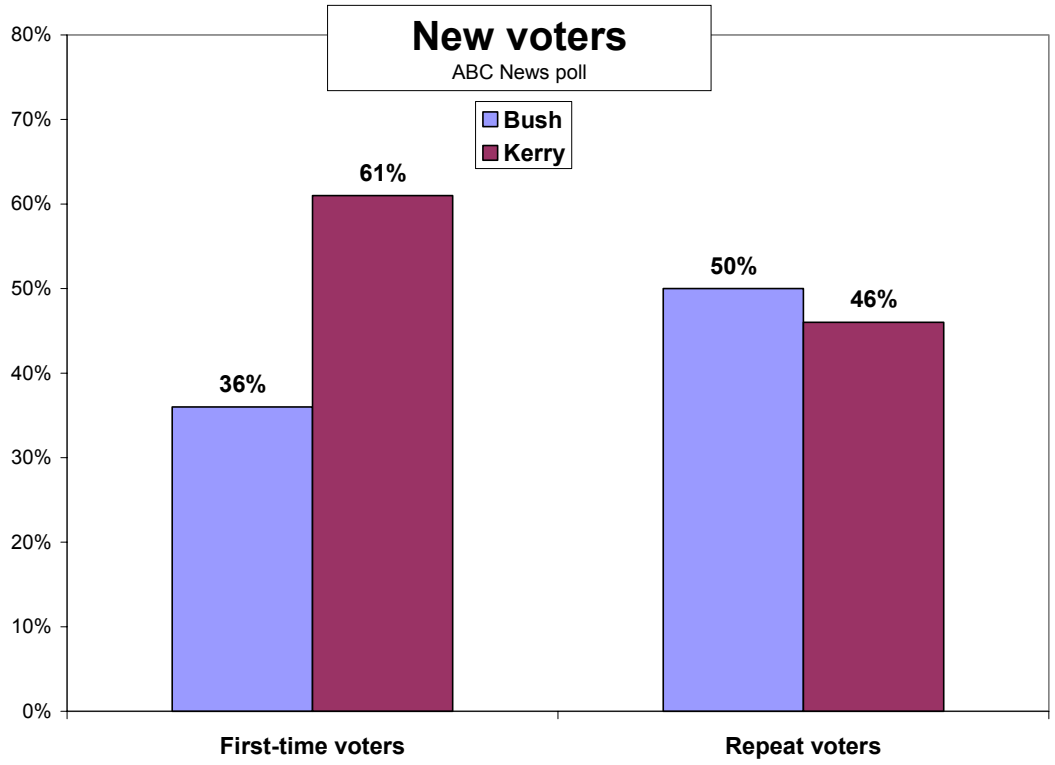
A single point in voter preferences separates George W. Bush and John Kerry, putting the keys to the 2004 election in the hands of last-minute moveable voters, get-out-the-vote drives on the ground and the vagaries of the electoral college.

Bush has 49 percent support from likely voters, Kerry 48 percent, with two percent undecided and one percent for Ralph Nader. Results are steady whether based on a three-, four- or five-day average of interviews; indeed they're within a point of the average, 49-47 percent, across a full month of daily tracking polls by ABC News.



Within this virtual dead heat are signs of hope and despair for both sides. Kerry's ahead, 51-44 percent, among independents, one of the two swing groups that have gone with the winner in the past six elections; and it's 49-47 percent among the other, white Catholics.

But Kerry's also relying heavily on young and first-time voters, two groups whose attention is less focused and whose turnout is less certain; if they don't show up, he's in trouble. Bush does better among repeat voters, and he's six points stronger in his base, winning 91 percent of Republicans compared with Kerry's 85 percent of Democrats.



Moveable voters, the seven percent who're undecided or say they may yet change their minds, break 43-33 percent in Kerry's direction. The number of moveables has dropped by half, from 14 percent, since the start of tracking. People who are still moveable at this late stage are very much a wildcard – again, if they turn out.

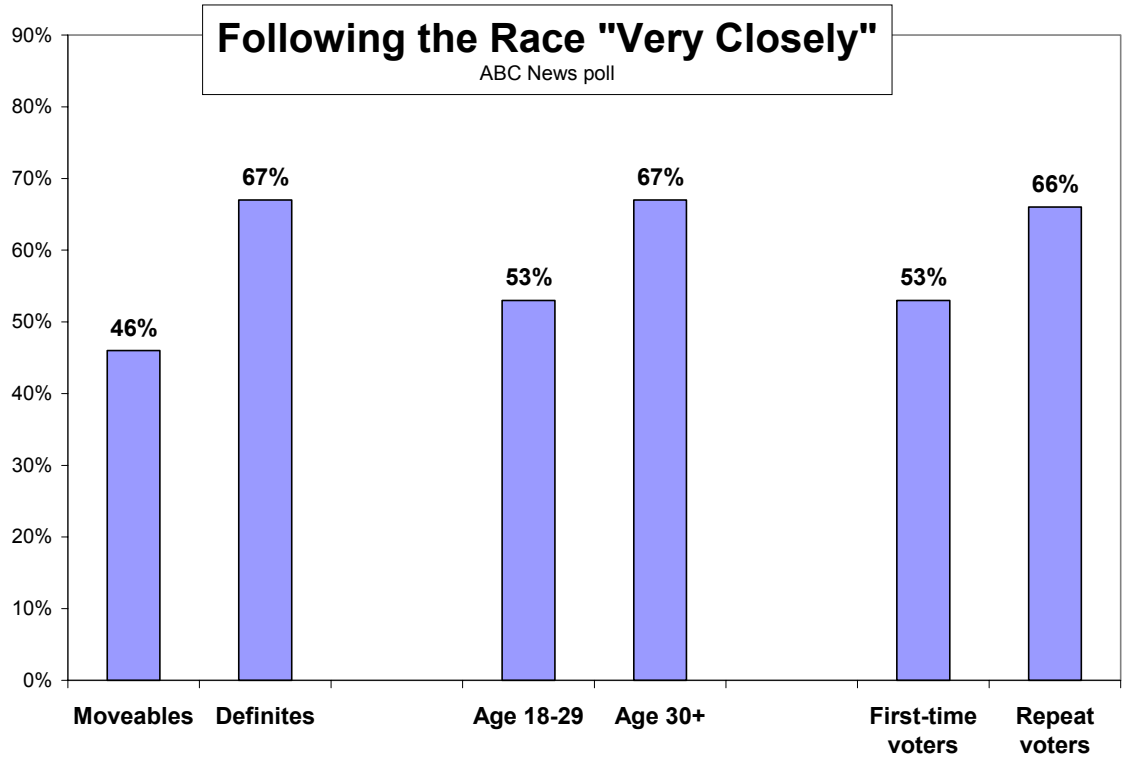
Union pull may also matter. Voters from union households make up a smaller-than-usual share of the electorate in this poll; in a high-turnout contest overall, the union share may drop as a percentage of the total. But a higher-than-anticipated union turnout helped Al Gore in 2000, and could help Kerry tomorrow; he's winning union-household voters by 61-35 percent, very similar to Gore's margin four years ago.

INTEREST – Attention to the race is vast: Ninety percent of registered voters are following it, and 59 percent are following it "very closely." That's 15 points higher than just before the 2000 election – an additional 25 million people closely tuned in.

Americans also are five points more likely this year to say they're registered to vote – small in percentage terms, but representing perhaps 10 million new registrants. A key question, again, is how many new registrants close the deal and actually vote.

Attention to the race raises some questions for Kerry. Moveable, first-time and young voters are all comparatively lower-interest groups – and less engagement may dampen their turnout. Moveables are 21 points less likely to be following the race very closely

than those who've definitely made up their minds; young voters, 14 points less likely than their elders; and first-time voters, 13 points less likely than repeat voters.



EARLY VOTERS – Election Day turnout's also key for Kerry because Bush has a slight edge among people who've already voted. Fifteen percent of "likely" voters in fact say they've already cast their ballots, dividing 53-45 percent Bush-Kerry. That compares with a dead-even 48-48 percent race among the rest.

As noted in previous reports, early voters are twice as likely to be retirement age, and they include a disproportionate number of Westerners and slightly more Republicans.

ISSUES – The contest is not just close, it's rich with compelling and competing issues that sharply divide the electorate. The campaign ends with an evenly matched triad of most-important issues: Twenty-two percent of likely voters say it's the war in Iraq, 21 percent the economy and 20 percent terrorism.

Despite his best effort, Bush has been unable to keep terrorism higher on the list; it peaked at 28 percent in early September, after his convention. But neither could Kerry keep the economy paramount; it peaked as the top concern at 31 percent in late August.

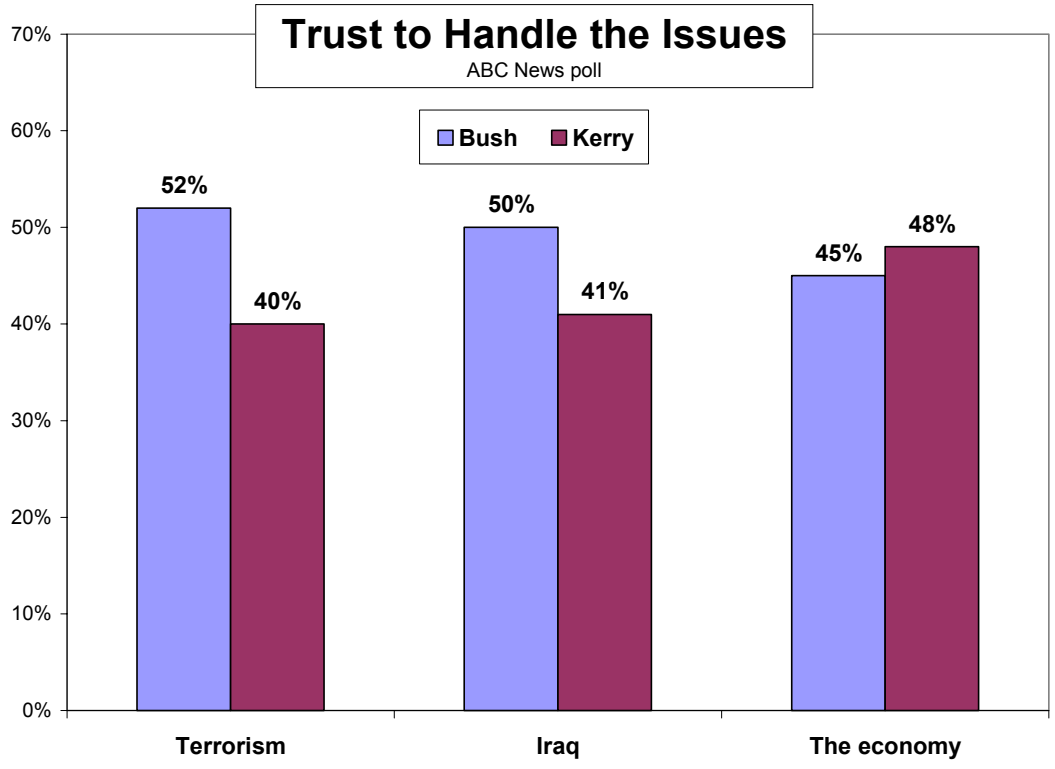
These priorities matter: Bush clearly would benefit if terrorism were as high in importance today as it was in early September; among those who call it the most important issue, 90 percent support him. And Kerry would gain if the economy or Iraq

were higher; he wins about two-thirds of likely voters who cite either of those as their top issue.

Kerry also has sizable leads among voters who say health care or education matters most to them. But another group – those who cite some other main concern – has grown through the fall campaign, from nine percent of likely voters to 21 percent today. And these "other issue" voters favor Bush by nearly 2-1, 62-33 percent.

While they cite a range of concerns, many "other issue" voters mention the candidates' personal attributes, or a religious or moral issue. Compared with other likely voters, they're 15 points more apt to be conservatives, nine points more apt to be Republicans and seven points more apt to be evangelical white Protestants, all core Bush groups.

Finally on the issues, among all likely voters – not just those who cite a single top issue – Bush leads in trust to handle terrorism by 52-40 percent; that's tightened from a peak 59-34 percent Bush advantage in early September. Bush also leads by 50-41 percent among all likely voters in trust to handle the situation in Iraq, while on the economy it's a closer division; 48 percent prefer Kerry, 45 percent Bush.



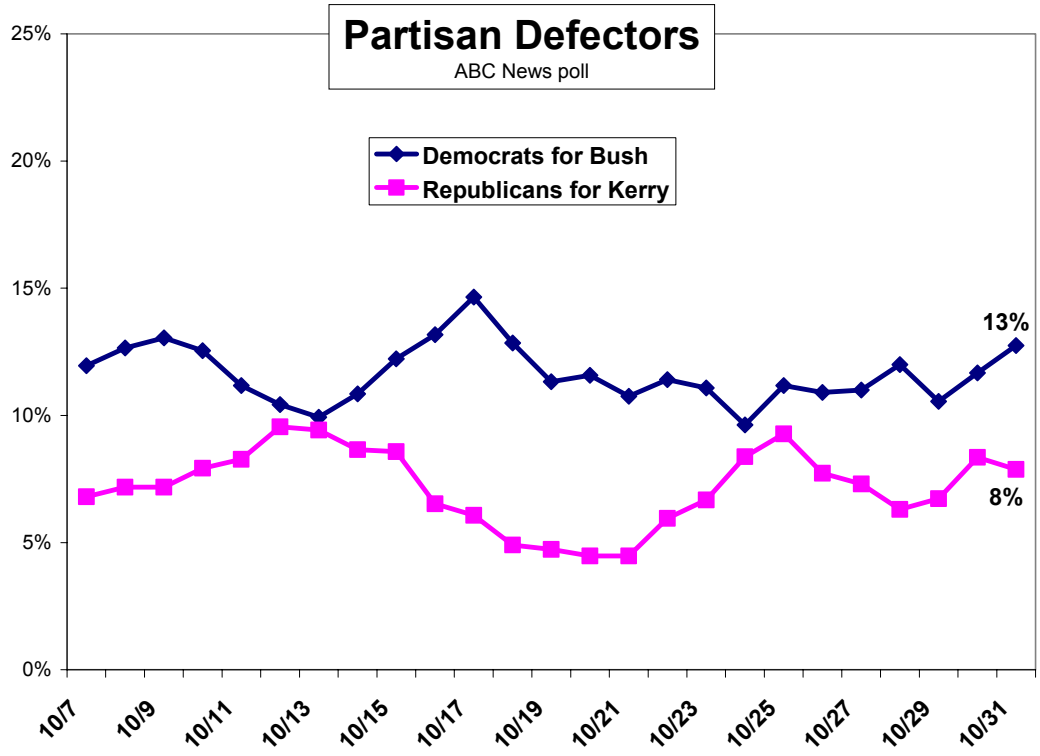
GENDER GAP – The gender gap is back, but it's not quite as broad as it was in 2000. Men favor Bush by 10 points, 53-43 percent, while women favor Kerry by seven points, 52-45. In 2000, it was Bush +11 among men, Gore +11 among women.

One difference this year is greater interplay with marriage, apparently linked to higher concern about terrorism among married couples. Twenty-three percent of marrieds, men and women alike, cite terrorism as the No. 1 issue in their vote; that slips to 15 percent among singles.

Traditionally, married men are a strong Republican group; single women, core Democrats. In 2000 their opposites – single men and married women – divided evenly between Gore and Bush. This year, instead, Bush is winning married women by 53-44 percent, while Kerry is winning single men, by 56-41 percent.

Other groups are dividing among customary lines. Kerry leads by 86-10 percent among blacks, one of the core Democratic groups, and by 63-36 percent among Hispanics. Evangelical white Protestants, core Republicans, split 76-22 percent for Bush.

PARTY – As noted, Bush is doing better in his base, with 91 percent support from Republicans, and pulling 13 percent of Democrats from Kerry; Kerry gets eight percent of Republicans. Poaching from the other side may be somewhat easier for Bush because there are three times as many conservative Democrats as there are liberal Republicans.



It's not solely about partisanship – a key difference between now and 2000 is that Kerry leads among independents in this poll, while in 2000 they split 47-45 percent, Bush-Gore. But the partisan makeup of tomorrow's electorate still is likely to be a critical factor. Democrats outnumbered Republicans by three or four points in each of the last four presidential elections, and the ratio translates directly to votes.

Whatever the result, this close election – like the last – could well be a sign of things to come. ABC News polls over the last 23 years have shown a gradual but unmistakable closing of the partisan gap; among all Americans, where there once were steadily more Democrats than Republicans in this country, there are now about equal numbers of both. That could be reflected in Election Day turnout; in any case, the slow trend suggests a close division in partisanship – and thus in national elections – for years to come.

HISTORY – Finally, the election promises to be historic in any number of ways, but here are two: No president since Harry Truman with a job approval rating under 50 percent the summer before the election has been re-elected; Bush was at 47 percent in June, and right on the bubble, 50 percent, in a tracking result two weeks ago.

At the same time, no incumbent running for re-election since 1956 has lost when consumer confidence was above its long-term average; and confidence today, while hardly brimming, is above average.

Therefore this either will mark the first time since Truman that a less-than-popular president has been re-elected; or the first time since Eisenhower that an incumbent's been thrown out when consumer confidence was better than usual. No such precedent is predictive – and one of these will not survive the 2004 election.

METHODOLOGY - This poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 28-31, 2004 among a random national sample of 4,009 adults, including 3,511 registered voters and 2,904 likely voters. The results have a two-point error margin for the likely voter sample. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934, or Lisa Finkel, (212) 456-6190.

*= less than 0.5 percent

3. (and 3a) If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for (George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republicans), (John Kerry and John Edwards, the Democrats), or Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo, the independents? Which candidate are you leaning toward?

Net Leaned Vote, Likely Voters:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
10/31/04	49	48	1	*	1	*	2
10/30/04	49	48	*	*	1	*	2
10/29/04	49	48	1	*	1	*	1
10/28/04	50	47	*	1	1	0	1
10/27/04	49	48	1	1	1	0	1
10/26/04	48	49	1	*	*	0	1
10/25/04	48	49	1	*	*	0	1

10/24/04	48	49	1	*	1	0	1
10/23/04	49	48	1	*	1	*	2
10/21/04	50	46	1	*	1	*	2
10/20/04	51	46	1	*	*	*	2
10/19/04	51	46	1	*	*	*	2
10/18/04	51	46	1	*	*	0	2
10/17/04	50	47	1	*	*	*	2
10/16/04	50	46	2	*	*	*	2
10/14/04	48	48	1	*	1	*	1
10/13/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
10/12/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
10/11/04	50	46	1	*	1	0	2
10/10/04	50	46	1	*	1	0	2
10/9/04	50	46	1	*	1	0	2
10/8/04	50	47	1	*	1	0	2
10/7/04	50	47	*	*	1	0	1
10/6/04	49	47	1	1	1	0	1
10/5/04	49	47	1	1	1	0	1
10/4/04	51	45	1	*	1	0	1
10/3/04	51	46	1	*	1	*	1
9/26/04	51	45	1	*	1	0	2
9/8/04	52	43	2	*	1	0	2
8/29/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
8/1/04	47	49	2	*	1	0	1
7/25/04	50	46	2	*	1	*	1

Net Leaned Vote, Registered Voters:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
10/31/04	48	47	1	*	1	1	2
10/30/04	48	47	1	*	1	1	2
10/29/04	48	47	1	*	1	*	2
10/28/04	49	45	1	*	1	*	2
10/27/04	48	46	2	1	1	1	2
10/26/04	47	47	1	1	1	*	2
10/25/04	47	47	2	*	1	*	2
10/24/04	47	47	2	*	1	*	2
10/23/04	49	45	1	*	1	*	3
10/21/04	50	44	1	*	1	*	3
10/20/04	51	44	1	*	1	*	3
10/19/04	51	44	1	*	1	*	2
10/18/04	51	44	1	*	1	*	3
10/17/04	49	46	1	*	1	*	3
10/16/04	49	45	2	*	1	*	3
10/14/04	47	48	2	*	1	*	2
10/13/04	47	47	2	*	2	*	2
10/12/04	47	47	2	*	2	*	2
10/11/04	48	46	2	*	1	*	2
10/10/04	48	46	1	*	1	*	3
10/9/04	48	47	1	*	2	*	3
10/8/04	48	46	1	*	2	*	3
10/7/04	48	47	1	*	2	*	2
10/6/04	49	46	1	1	2	*	2
10/5/04	50	45	2	*	1	*	2
10/4/04	52	43	2	*	1	*	2
10/3/04	50	45	2	*	1	*	2
9/26/04	51	44	2	1	1	*	2
9/8/04	50	44	2	*	2	*	2
8/29/04	48	47	2	*	1	*	2
8/1/04	44	50	2	*	1	1	2
7/25/04	48	46	3	*	1	*	1

7/11/04	46	46	4	1	2	1	1
6/20/04	44	48	6	*	1	*	1
5/23/04	46	46	4	*	1	1	1
4/18/04	48	43	6	*	2	1	*
3/7/04	44	48	3	*	1	2	2

4. (IF NAMED CANDIDATE) Will you definitely vote for (CANDIDATE), or is there a chance you could change your mind and vote for someone else? (IF CHANCE CHANGE MIND) Is there a good chance you'll change your mind, or would you say it's pretty unlikely?

	Definitely vote	---Chance change mind---- NET	Good	Unlikely	No opin.
Likely voters:					
10/31/04 All	94	5	2	3	1
Bush	95	5	2	3	1
Kerry	93	6	2	3	1

Call for full trend.

5. What (was/will be) the single most important issue in your vote for president this year: (The U.S. campaign against terrorism), (the war in Iraq), (the economy and jobs), (education), (health care), or something else?

	Terrorism	Iraq	Economy/ jobs	Educ- ation	Health care	Other	No op.
10/31/04 LV	20	22	21	5	9	21	3
10/30/04 LV	19	23	21	5	10	20	3
10/29/04 LV	19	23	23	5	10	19	3
10/28/04 LV	20	24	23	4	9	18	2
10/25/04 LV	21	22	24	4	9	18	2
10/24/04 LV	20	21	24	5	9	19	2
10/17/04 LV	19	26	26	5	9	13	3
10/14/04 LV	20	26	22	4	14	13	1
10/12/04 LV	22	24	24	4	11	13	2
10/10/04 LV	23	24	24	3	12	12	2
10/7/04 LV	23	23	23	4	10	15	2
10/3/04 LV	24	26	21	4	12	12	2
9/26/04 LV	24	20	27	5	11	10	3
RV	21	19	28	6	13	10	3
9/8/04 LV	28	20	25	6	11	9	2
RV	25	18	27	6	13	8	2
8/29/04 RV	19	19	31	6	12	11	2
LV	21	19	31	4	11	12	2
8/1/04 RV	20	23	25	7	11	12	2
7/25/04 RV	20	21	27	7	12	12	1

6. Who do you trust to do a better job handling (ITEM), (Bush) or (Kerry)?

10/30/04 - Summary Table - Likely Voters

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
a. The situation in Iraq	50	41	1	4	4
b. The US campaign against terrorism	52	40	1	3	4
c. The economy	45	48	1	3	3

Trend:

a. The situation in Iraq

		Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
10/30/04	LV	50	41	1	4	4
10/17/04	LV	52	41	1	3	4
10/14/04	LV	50	41	1	4	4
10/13/04	LV	49	42	1	4	4
10/12/04	LV	50	41	1	3	4
10/11/04	LV	52	40	1	3	3
10/10/04	LV	54	39	1	3	3
10/7/04	LV	53	43	*	2	2
10/3/04	LV	52	41	1	3	3
9/26/04	LV	53	41	*	3	4
	RV	53	40	*	3	4
9/8/04	LV	55	37	1	3	4
	RV	53	37	1	4	6
8/29/04	LV	53	43	*	2	2
	RV	52	44	*	2	2
8/1/04	LV	48	47	*	2	3
	RV	46	48	*	2	4
7/25/04	RV	52	40	1	3	3
7/11/04	RV	47	47	1	4	2
	All	47	47	1	3	2
6/20/04	RV	49	47	*	3	1
	All	50	45	*	4	1
5/23/04		48	42	*	6	3
4/18/04		52	41	*	4	2
3/7/04		47	48	1	3	2
2/11/04		48	41	1	6	5

b. The U.S. campaign against terrorism

		Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
10/30/04	LV	52	40	1	3	4
10/17/04	LV	56	36	2	3	3
10/14/04	LV	54	38	2	3	4
10/13/04	LV	52	39	2	3	4
10/12/04	LV	53	38	1	3	4
10/11/04	LV	55	37	1	3	3
10/10/04	LV	56	37	1	3	3
10/7/04	LV	55	40	1	2	3
10/3/04	LV	54	38	1	2	4
9/26/04	LV	53	38	1	3	5
	RV	54	37	1	3	5
9/8/04	LV	59	34	1	3	4
	RV	57	35	1	3	4
8/29/04	LV	57	38	1	2	3
	RV	56	38	1	2	3
8/1/04	LV	50	44	*	1	4
	RV	48	45	*	1	5
7/25/04	RV	55	37	2	3	3
7/11/04	RV	51	43	1	3	3
	All	51	42	1	3	3
6/20/04	RV	48	47	*	3	2
	All	47	48	1	3	1
5/23/04		52	39	1	4	4
4/18/04		58	37	1	3	1
3/7/04		57	36	2	2	3
2/11/04		53	37	1	4	5

c. The economy

		Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
10/30/04	LV	45	48	1	3	3
10/17/04	LV	46	47	1	4	3
10/14/04	LV	44	49	1	4	2
10/13/04	LV	44	49	2	4	2
10/12/04	LV	45	48	2	3	3
10/11/04	LV	47	46	1	3	3
10/10/04	LV	47	45	1	3	3
10/7/04	LV	47	48	1	2	3
9/26/04	LV	48	42	1	4	5
	RV	48	43	*	4	5
9/8/04	LV	49	43	1	4	3
	RV	47	43	1	4	5
8/29/04	LV	49	47	*	2	1
	RV	48	47	1	2	2
8/1/04	LV	45	49	*	2	3
	RV	41	52	*	3	4
7/25/04	RV	47	46	1	3	4
7/11/04	RV	44	50	1	3	2
7/11/04		43	51	1	3	3
6/20/04	RV	45	50	1	2	1
6/20/04		45	50	1	3	1
5/23/04		43	48	*	5	3
4/18/04		47	47	1	4	1
3/7/04		41	53	*	4	2
2/11/04		41	49	1	4	5

END