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# *Rocky Mountain Poll*

NEWS RELEASE  
RMP 2004-III-11

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## BUSH HOLDS FIVE-POINT LEAD IN MARICOPA COUNTY 25 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE STILL IN PLAY

Phoenix, Arizona, August 24, 2004. President George W. Bush holds a decreasing and surprisingly narrow five-point lead over Democrat John Kerry in predominately Republican Maricopa County. Polling completed on August 18, and conducted just as a controversial television commercial attacking John Kerry's war record was aired, finds Bush with 46 percent, Kerry with 41 percent and 13 percent undecided. What is more, since Maricopa County accounts for close to 60 percent of the vote in Arizona, the Bush lead appears to have narrowed to such a degree that the election could be determined in the outlying counties and, particularly in Pima County, which has traditionally favored Democratic candidates.

Among voters most likely to go to the polls in any election, Mr. Bush has a wider eleven-point lead, but with a strong voter turnout expected in this year's hotly-contested presidential election, the narrower lead is probably the more realistic projection to watch.

The survey also reveals that among Kerry and Bush voters, roughly 16 percent say they "might change their vote" prior to election day (a figure that is roughly equal in proportion for both candidates). These "might change" Kerry or Bush supporters represent about 13 percent of the overall electorate in Maricopa County. Their numbers, when added to the 13 percent who declare themselves to currently have no favorite in the race ("undecided"), raises the proportion of potential swing voters to 26 percent.

And just as Pima County and the rural counties may play a pivotal role in the outcome of this year's election, so may Independent voters. For example, while 72 percent of Republican and 75 percent of Democrat voters are "firm" in their loyalty to the flag-bearer of their party, only 46 percent of Independent voters are firm in their commitment. Further, Independents may be leaning toward Kerry. As of this survey, for example, 46 percent of Independent voters favor Kerry, compared to only 35 percent for Bush, but more importantly, 31 percent are "firmly" in the Kerry camp, compared to only 15 percent firmly committed to Bush.

Kerry has also started to show greater strength among Latino voters than we have seen in the recent past: 60 percent of Latino voters in Maricopa County are now for Kerry, including 51 percent firmly committed to Kerry's election. In contrast, 28 percent favor Bush, and all are firmly committed.

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The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 452 voters throughout Maricopa County conducted between August 13 and August 17, 2004, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit [www.brcpolls.com](http://www.brcpolls.com) to read this and other recent polls.

Other findings reveal that the race may be tightening because of emphasis made by the Kerry campaign to characterize the Bush tax program as favoring America's most wealthy families over middle and lower income families and his arguments that Bush administration policies on social security and prescription drugs hurt retirees. The impact of these arguments may be seen in the vote when it is broken apart by family income of the voter. More specifically, the vote for Bush is 53 percent among the highest income families, drops to 41 percent in middle income families and to only 29 percent in the lowest income groups. Middle income families may be the deciding battleground as they are currently divided 41 percent for each candidate and 18 percent uncommitted. Retirees are splitting 45 percent for Bush to 41 percent for Kerry in a county where retirees usually vote five-to-three for the GOP candidate.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2004-III-11) is based on 452 telephone interviews conducted from August 13 through August 17, 2004, with voters throughout Maricopa County. In a sample of this size, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire voter population been surveyed. The Republican sample included 203 voters and has a margin of error of plus or minus 6.9 percent, while the Democrat and Independent samples totaled 140 and 109 and had margins of error of plus or minus 8.4 and 9.5 percent, respectively. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

**BELOW:** Statistical data

For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results)

**STATISTICAL DATA**

Behavior Research Center  
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
RMP 2004-III-11

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*"If the election for president were being held today, would you vote for the Republican George Bush or for the Democrat John Kerry."  
(ROTATE NAMES)*

MARICOPA COUNTY

	August 2004	July 2004	May 2004	April 2004
Bush	46%	49%	49%	51%
Kerry	41	37	37	39
Uncommitted	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>10</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
(Net to Bush)	+5	+12	+12	+12

DETAIL: MARICOPA – AUGUST 04

	Total	Income Under \$35K	\$25K to \$54.9K	\$55K +	Retirees
Bush: firm	39%	23%	31%	48%	39%
Bush: may change (Net Bush)	<u>7</u> (46%)	<u>6</u> (29%)	<u>10</u> (41%)	<u>5</u> (53%)	<u>6</u> (45%)
Kerry: firm	35	50	35	28	38
Kerry: may change (Net Kerry)	<u>6</u> (41%)	<u>8</u> (58%)	<u>6</u> (41%)	<u>8</u> (36%)	<u>3</u> (41%)
Undecided – lean Bush	3	2	5	2	5
Undecided – lean Kerry	3	0	1	4	1
Totally undecided (Net undecided)	<u>7</u> (13%)	<u>11</u> (13%)	<u>12</u> (18%)	<u>5</u> (11%)	<u>8</u> (14%)